BUSINESS / B1
P3.82-trillion gov't debt seen in 2007

ACROSS / A15
Lim may run vs De Venecia in Pangasinan

ENTERTAINMENT / D1
Lino speaks up on relationship with KC

METRO / A19
Man shoots neighbor for urinating in front of house, is shot dead by responding cops

NEWS / A2
Valentine's Day bomb plot foiled, say police

DAY IS not complete without the marching band: Here come the ... politicians.

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, February 13, 2007 ★★ Vol. 22 / No. 67 www.inquirer.net

Will 'Boom Tarat Tarat' win votes for politicos?
By Christine V. Esguerra

IT'S "BOOM TARAT TARAT" FOR MANNY, "PARA Sa'yo" for Tito, and "Sagot" for Chiz.

Former members of the Spice Boys and the Bright Boys are tapping their Eskwela-era political battle, with seats in the Senate at stake this time.

With youth, looks and probably everything

PAGE A-9

Circus comes to town

Show biz stars outshine Team Unity, UNO bets

By Nikko Dizon, Michael Lim Ubac and Lala B. Salaverria

THE CARNIVAL IS BACK in town and President Macapagal-Arroyo, singing campaign jingles, is right in the midst of it, along with some of the local entertainment industry's biggest attractions.

In a frenzied day that marked the deadline for the filing of senatorial candidacies, administration, opposition and independent politicians yesterday trooped to the Commission on Elections headquarters to formalize their bids for Senate seats in the May 14 elections.

But in terms of public attention, Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan, running as an independent, was overshone by Megastar Sharon Cuneta, his wife.

Reelectionist Sen. Ralph Recto, running under Malacañang's banner, was no match to the attention received by his spouse, Star for All Seasons and Lipa Mayor Vilma Santos.

One aspirant came with a bona fide.

Maverick Sen. Jinkee Arroyo, a known champion of opposition causes who raised opposition hackles the other day by declaring that President Arroyo should be allowed to finish her term because they couldn't offer anything better, seemed above the hullaballoo.

Among the earliest to file his candidacy yesterday, Arroyo wore a simple, collared shirt without any show biz stars by his side.

Luxury and sport utility vehicles crowded the streets alongside and in front of the Comelec headquarters.

Blocks away, at the Manila Hotel, Ms. Arroyo was putting on her own show.

Speaking at a two-day convention of her party Kampi on the eve of the start of the 90-day campaign season, she rallied support

CIRCUS A9

MEGA POWER. Sen. Francis Pangilinan and wife, singer-actress Sharon Cuneta, walk to the Comelec office in Intramuros on Monday. AFP PHOTO

STAR FOR ALL SEASONS. Sen. Ralph Recto and wife, actress and Lipa City Mayor Vilma Santos, arrive at the poll office. AFP PHOTO

12TH PICK. Sulu Sultan Jamalul Kiram III is all smiles as he leaves after filing his candidacy. JOHN BALUYAN

PROVINCIAL FORCE. Ilocos Sur Gov. Chavit Singson (center) is backed up by four governors—(from left) Armand Sanchez of Batangas, Raul Lee of Sorsogon, Leandro Verceles of Catanduanes, Antonio Kho of Masbate—and boxing champ Manny Pacquiao.

No photo-ops with Erap hurting opposition

By Veit Corrinvas and Alcuin Papa

GEARING UP FOR A TOUGH ELECTION campaign, opposition leaders have missed "crucial" face-to-face meetings with detained ex-President Joseph Estrada since police began restricting his visitors and the use of his mobile phones, his spokesperson said yesterday.

Lawyer Rufus Rodriguez said Estrada could not have photo opportunities with opposition candidates both in the local and national polls if he continued to be "isolated" at his Tanay, Rizal, rest house.

In contrast, some candidates in the 2004 elections were able to see Estrada in detention and had their photographs taken with him. The charismatic actor-turned-political kingpin endorsed the candidates by raising their hands—a usual image in campaign posters.

"Many of them won because of those posters," Rodriguez said.

"He would have given us many inputs on how our campaign is to be done and who are the local candidates he would recommend," Estrada's spokesperson said in an interview with the Inquirer on the eve of the official campaign period for the Senate race.

Rodriguez said that such a rule, including joining the hands of opposition candidates, could not just be "delegat-

NO PHOTO-OPS A11

SWEET VINDICATION

Defiant Dixie Chicks bag 5 Grammy Awards

LOS ANGELES—THE DIXIE CHICKS completed a defiant comeback at the Grammy Awards, winning five trophies after being shunned by the American country music establishment over the group's anti-Bush comments leading up to the Iraq invasion.

The Texas trio won record and song of the year for the no-regrets anthem "Not Ready to Make Nice." They also won best country album, which was ironic considering that the group said they did not consider themselves country artists anymore.

"I'm ready to make nice!" lead singer Natalie Maines exclaimed as the group accepted the album of the year award. "I think people are using their freedom of speech with all these awards. We get the message."

Mary J. Blige's comeback also was

DEFIANT DIXIE A4

Spain says adios siesta, hola Viagra

MADRID, SPAIN—A FEW MONTHS ago, a man walked into a pharmacy in Madrid, pulled out two toy guns and told the attendants to hand over all the Viagra in stock.

Two hours later, in what was perhaps a show of gratitude, the man returned with two bouquets of roses, before being arrested.

Such are the extremes to which men in this famously macho country will go to obtain the male impotency drug—nicknamed sexo azul, or blue sex, by Spaniards—which costs $104 for a box of eight blue diamond-

SPAIN SAYS A4

Even in a hospital, it's a story of the heart

By Tony S. Bergonia

AT FIRST GLANCE, THERE SEEMS TO BE nothing wrong with Flordeliza Natividad.

The 22-year-old former garments factory worker giggles as she walks to what has become her home for the last six days—one of several beds separated by mint green curtains at the Philippine Heart Center (PHC) charity ward.

Her stay at the PHC could be the last stop in a journey that started in a mountain village in Zambales. It was made possible by Lotus Foundation Inc., a little known group that has also brought six others, including a child, for treatment at the PHC.

Irene Valeroso, who started Lotus in the Philippines, says it's a journey that would put Flordeliza through open heart surgery. It's an expensive operation that Valeroso says she hopes would coincide with Valentine's Day tomorrow.

"It's a story of the heart," she says.

Flordeliza grins and giggles. Those are her ways of greeting visitors and, in doing so, her barely 5-foot frame shakes, making her look like a happy 12-year-old at play.

The PHC-issued hospital gown—white with small, red hearts printed on it—hangs like oversized pajamas over her body.

Doctors who diagnosed her say she has congenital heart disease. Like many others who suffer from this type of ailment since birth, Flordeliza had been unaware of it.

Just a few days ago, she was with her family in San Marcelino, in a bar that stands on a borrowed lot.

In her teens, she says she knew something was wrong with her, but didn't pay attention to what her body felt.

"I easily get tired," Flordeliza says in an interview at her hospital bed.

Despite that, she got work at a Kore-

EVEN A6

Second FRONTPAGE

PCSO DRAW RESULT

17 20 | 7 0 1 8

Weekly SUPERTRIS Drawing

7 2 4 | 2 3 8

MEGALOTTO 6/45

4 12 31 22 37 43

P9,931,472.20

WEATHER FORECAST

Cops bare Valentine's Day bomb plot by Abus, MILF

By Nancy C. Carvajal

POLICE HAVE UNCOVERED A PLOT BY THE AL-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to bomb areas in Makati and Zamboanga cities on Valentine's Day.

Chief Supt. Reynaldo Wycoco, head of the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO), in a memorandum, directed police in Metro Manila to step up security measures to preempt the reported terror plans.

A copy of the directive was obtained by the Inquirer yesterday.

Wycoco said intelligence information revealed the MILF's special operations group (SOG), the ASG and its affiliate, the Rajah Sulaiman Movement, would attack an undisclosed area in Makati and the Plaza Ilaya department store in Zamboanga "sit or before" Valentine's Day.

Also yesterday, the Philippine National Police were placed on "heightened alert" as of 8 a.m. today, Chief Supt. Samuel Ingalla said. This means half of the 110,000-strong PNP will have to be at their posts at all times.

The PNP spokesperson said the NCRPO had ordered more patrols, especially in many transportation centers like the MRT and the LRT, as well as other vital government installations.

However, he said there had been no "specific intelligence information" that the bombers would launch an attack to "commemorate" the Valentine's Day bombings in 2005 that killed seven people and wounded 150 others in the cities of Makati, General Santos and Davao. Four of the dead were in Makati.

Abu Sayyaf spokesperson Abu Solaiman, who was killed last month, had announced the 2005 bombings 30 minutes before the attacks and described them as the ASG's "Valentine's gift" to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

In his directive, Ingalla ordered station police to step up security measures and intelligence. "Monitor and institute appropriate security measures to preempt the plan," said the file.

Ingalla said initial intelligence reports indicated that in December 2006, three Jemah suspects from the MILF had inspected potential targets in Metro Manila.

He said the plan was to be carried out by one "Ranjon Van Dongon," alias Abu Turk, described as a bin Laden member of MILF top command, and one Ramos del Rosario.

Among the ASG-MILF-JI members allegedly involved in the plan were Rado Abubakar, Abdulbasit Abubakar Xaking, Dhor Ukad and Benjamin Lampot.

He added that further intelligence reports indicated that a senior ASG member from Lamitan, Basilan, identified as Timah Itah was instructed to be at Globe de Oro, in Quiapo, Manila, to make the end of December.

Another alleged MILF member only known to the police as "Engr" was also supposed to join the group of Itah.

Two months ago, police and Marines rushed to suspected Abu terrorist hideout on an island in Laguna Lake, killing one man and arresting three. Five others escaped. The raid, police officials said, was prompted by an intelligence report that terrorists planned to stage bombings on Valentine's Day. With details from

Scout Rangers kill 2 Abu members on Jolo

SOLDIERS OF THE ELITE ARMY scout Rangers yesterday exchanged fire with about 60 Abu Sayyaf bandits in Talipao town on Jolo island, killing two and capturing two others, the military said.

Army commander Brig. Gen. Benjamin Mangudadatu said the rebels were led by Alhabsi Omar, who carries a P150,000 reward on his head.

Three were ex-members among the government troops.

Earlier yesterday, two gunmen were killed and two were arrested after they opened fire on Philippine Marines who were approaching the village of Asubasa, in Lush town in Indanan, Marine spokesperson Lt. Col. Ariel Caralipan said.

Lt. Gen. Silvano, commander of the 2nd Marine Brigade, said three killed, wounded and arrested were not Abu Sayyaf members but militant fighting clan war in Sulawesi.

Asked said the soldiers, who were on their way to a mission on Mount Tumangan, were "caught in the crossfire between two feuding families."

"Suddenly, they (soldiers) were greeted with bullets," he said.

Abunda explained that the troops were retaliation by the group of Hadi Bahih of Asubasan to the followers of his enemy, a certain Hamsirin Sahali of Sumangay Indanan, also in Lush.

He said the government forces responded with gun fire when fired upon. "We didn't even know they were all armed civilians," he said, adding three soldiers were injured in the shooting.

Asked said the three soldiers the unit arrested were brought to the Lush police station. "We have filed charges of violations of the gun law and attempted murder by directly harassing our troops," he said.

Apart from an estimated 200 Abu Sayyaf guerrillas, Jolo is also host to the Moro National Liberation Front also are active on Jolo.

The MNLF was the largest Muslim separatist group and signed a peace accord with the government in 1996. Many of its members, however, have refused to disarm and have maintained strongholds on Jolo and Basilan.

The MILF guerrilla force remained the government of stopping on promises to defuse political and economic conversions in predominantly Muslim areas. AP, with a report from Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

SC seeks comments on voided Comelec deal

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE SUPREME COURT HAS ordered Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez and officials of the Commission on Elections to comment on the petition seeking the filing of criminal charges against the latter in connection with the voided P1.3-billion poll automation deal.

The petition was filed in December last year by former Senate President Jovito Salonga's Kilusang Pagbabago Foundation and the Ramon Mitra Foundation.

The petition also sought to nullify the Ombudsman's resolution absolving Comelec officials from any liability for approving the controversial deal.

Kilusang Pagbabago said the Ombudsman should be compelled to file criminal charges against Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos and Commissioners Resurreccion Borra, Florentino Tuason, Rufino Javier, Manuel Barcelona, Luzviminda Tancangco and Mehol Sadain for entering into an alleged anomalous deal.

In a Jan. 30 resolution, the high court gave Gutierrez and the Comelec officials 10 days upon being given notice of the order within which to file their comments.

Earlier, the high tribunal also asked Gutierrez to comment on a petition filed by opposition lawmakers seeking to reverse its ruling clearing the Comelec officials of any wrongdoing in the controversial deal.

The Supreme Court earlier voided the P1.3-billion poll automation contract which the Comelec had awarded to Mega Pacific for violating the law and the poll body's own bidding rules. The contract also said Mega Pacific's counting machines were unacceptable in election fraud.

The high tribunal ordered the Ombudsman to determine the criminal liability of Abalos and others in the awarding of the contract.

But the Ombudsman said none of the Comelec officials could be criminally charged for the deal, claiming the evidence was insufficient to establish bad faith or partiality on the part of the poll officials.

The Ombudsman's ruling has been roundly criticized, with Salonga describing the decision as an "unthinkable reversal" of the high court ruling.

Kampi to ensure 90% poll victory, says Puno

By Norman Bordadora

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo's party Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) yesterday declared that to increase membership and widen geographic reach could help deliver a 90-percent victory for the administration's candidates for Congress.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, the party's president on leave, said Kampi's membership had swollen to 55 congressmen, seven governors, 13 vice governors, 74 board members, 373 mayors, 349 vice mayors and 3,796 councilors.

He added that the members were expected to increase even more in the coming weeks.

With such numbers, added to those of other pro-administration groups like LAMMP, the Nacionalista Peoples' Coalition and the thirteen wing of the Liberal Party, Puno said, he expected the administration to secure 70 percent of the seats in Congress.

"The combined political machinery of all the member parties of the ruling coalition and the individual track records of its candidates offer any chance to overwhelm the politics of performance and re-

form instead of the politics of transition and obstructionism will spell the landslide victory of the pro-administration slate," Puno said.

Puno's statement came after he told the Inquirer that 17 more congressmen will join Kampi before the formal campaign period starts.

Committee Sec. Sig. Luis Villafuerte, Kampi president, said the list of those that the party had adopted the 12 nominated candidates of the administration's "team Unity" slate.

To ensure a good showing in the polls, Villafuerte added, Kampi and the other parties under the administration coalition would also meet with their respective chairmen before they step up in the congressional districts and come up with common candidates for the House.

"We will find meeting points with the Lakas, NPC and LP-Atienza wing in the hope of coming up with common candidates in the districts," Villafuerte said.

Villafuerte said he would represent Kampi in the discussions while Speaker Jose de Venecia would attend for Lakas, Blas Ople, Michael Defensor for the NPC and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza for the pro-administration wing of the LP.

Leviste hearing reset

THE SCHEDULED arraignment today of ex-Batangas Gov. Antonio Leviste for his alleged murder of long-time friend and aide Rafael de los Santos has been postponed for next week.

Citing "complexities" of the issues, Leviste's lawyers earlier filed a motion to transfer the murder case to another venue.

In a closed-door hearing yesterday, Judge Elmo Alameda of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 150, denied the motion from both sides and rescheduled the arraignment to Feb. 19 (CBCP 6:30).

Leviste's lawyers, Jesus Crispin Remo, were disappointed with the order, saying that it only showed the judge's partiality in handling the case.

"This is a move to throw the book and in a hurry to decide on the case... The motion is illogical because upgrading the case to murder was more complex but he resolved it in seconds... surely without giving us time to file our comment," Lapeña told the reporters in a phone interview.

But Remo, however, for Emmanuel Ribaya, who worked for the ex-governor's homicide charge to murder, said he believed in the motion, particularly of the judge.

Jocelyn R. Uy and Margarite C. Ortiz

Solon points out prohibition in foreign service movements

A CONGRESSMAN HAS CALLED the attention of the Department of Foreign Affairs to a Commission on Elections resolution prohibiting the transfer, promotion, extension or recall from duty of any member of the foreign service between July 26, 2006, and Aug. 13, 2007.

Rep. Ruy Elias Lopez (Buhay Hayaan Yumabong) yesterday said Comelec Resolution No. 7658 dated July 17, 2006, prescribes activities and the period within which certain acts are prohibited in connection with the May 14, 2007, elections. The resolution extends to members of agencies attached to the foreign service.

The resolution therefore covers the replacement of Ambassador Lauro Baja, Philippine Permanent Representative to the United Nations, by retired Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. who was reportedly appointed to the UN post by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

If the Comelec resolution were to be strictly followed, Baja could not be recalled and Davide could not take over until after Aug. 12, Mindanaoan said.

Davide's appointment is pending at the Commission on Appointments.

In another development, the military yesterday reminded its personnel of the prohibition against campaigning for any candidate even if he were one of their own, like Lt. Antonio Trillanes who is detained on rebellion charges but has been on his bid to be a political wing.

Trillanes, who is the secretary-general of the United Opposition's "United Coalition." He is under detention in Fort Bonifacio awaiting trial before both the military tribunal and a regional trial court for his involvement in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny.

Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro, Armed Forces of the Philippines spokesperson, told reporters that while Trillanes had been detained, separated from the service by dismissal for having filed a petition of candidacy, he is still placed him under the jurisdiction of the AFP.

Bacarro said that under the terms of his confinement, Trillanes cannot leave detention to campaign.

And while it is the right of military personnel to vote for Trillanes, they can't campaign for him, Bacarro said. Christina U. Hernandez

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Spain says adios siesta, hola Viagra

From page A1

shaped tablets and has become as popular with teenage clubbers as it is with men in their 70s.

"There has been a Viagra explosion in Spain," says Dr. Carlos San Martin, the country's leading urologist who counsels couples and has tried Viagra himself.

"Some people are taking it for physiological reasons, but Viagra is also becoming a social phenomenon, a recreational thing that men of all ages are using because they want to be 'supermen.'"

Women are demanding their boyfriends get prescriptions. Young partygoers are buying tablets from dealers in discos for as much as $60 a pill, cutting them into pieces, and distributing them among their friends, even though doctors in Granada say the drug's effectiveness, speculation-ing.

Doctors here say that some men are even taking symptoms to try to get the tablets, whose main ingredient, sildenafil citrate, helps increase the blood flow to the penis and is effective for up to four hours.

Pfizer, the maker of Viagra, says Spain has moved into the vanguard of a European Viagra trend in part because economic prosperity has transformed the country from a relaxed Mediterranean culture, where the siesta was sacrosanct, into an Anglo-Saxon style, work-hards-and-play-hards nation.

"This virus, says Belen Alguacil Hernando, a Pfizer spokesperson, is spreading here with the Spanish male's libido.

"We used to have a siesta, to sleep all afternoon, to eat well," she adds. "But now we have become a fast food nation where everyone is stressed out, and this is not good for male sexual performance."

Pfizer says it sold nearly 1 million boxes of Viagra in Spain last year, the equivalent of one box for every 37 men 18 and older. Globally, Pfizer earned $1.66 billion from Viagra sales in 2006.

Sociologists say that an increased willingness to address sexual problems reflects Spain's sexual liberation after the repressive years of the Franco years.

The country's freewheeling party culture also has played a role. *New York Times News Service*

Gore welcomed with massive cheer at the Grammys

LOS ANGELES—PERHAPS UNUSUALLY for a politician, former US Vice President Al Gore was welcomed with a standing cheer when he appeared at the Grammys on Sunday to present an award at the premier music ceremony.

Gore, who has been out of the mainstream political scene since he lost the US presidential election to George W. Bush in 2000, was greeted with a huge cheer when he took the stage with singer and actress Queen Latifah.

"Now, I can't believe that. It's unbelievable. I think they love you more, you hear that?" Queen Latifah told amid the cheers.

"I think they're cheering for you," Gore replied. "But it is still a thrill for me to be here with the musical community that has long been at the forefront of the effort to protect and renew the environment."

Gore received a similarly rapturous reception at the MTV Music Video Awards last year and is up for an Oscar later this month for his global warming documentary "An Inconvenient Truth."

Gore has repeatedly said he is not planning to run for president in 2008, despite a clamor, notably from some celebrities, for him to do so. AFP

FORMER US Vice President Al Gore shares the stage with Grammy-winning rapper/singer and Academy Award-nominated actress Queen Latifah at the 49th Grammy Awards in Los Angeles Sunday night. AP

Defiant Dixie Chicks bag 5 Grammy Awards

From page A1

Idol" winner Carrie Underwood won three new artist, beating out teenage R&B singer Chris Brown, and R&B performers Gnarls Barley Barkley, James Blunt and Imogen Heap.

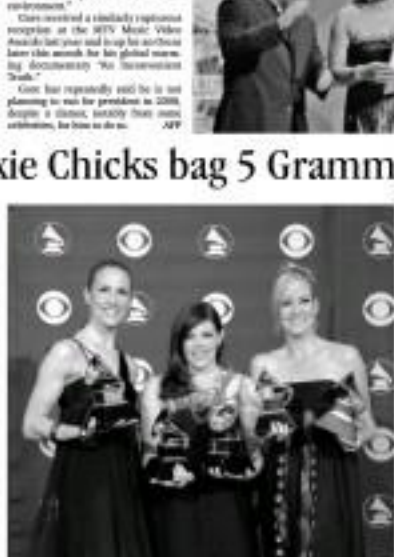
The Dixie Chicks won all five awards they were nominated for, never vindication after the unprecedented taboo the country-rock band were threatened and sales pummeled when Maines criticized President George W. Bush at a London concert on the eve of the Iraq war in 2003. Almost overnight, one of the most successful groups of any genre was boycotted by Nashville and disappeared from country radio.

With "Taking the Long Way" the women relied on producer Rick Rubin's guidance for an album that was more rock and less country. Rubin, who also produced "Rainbow Acadium," was honored as producer of the year.)

New political climate

The standing ovations the Chicks received on Sunday illustrated how much the political climate has changed regarding the Iraq war, and even Bush.

"That's interesting," Maines crowed from the podium after the country award was handed out earlier in the night.



A GRAND SLAM AT THE GRAMMYS. The defiant Dixie Chicks—from left, Emily Robison, Natalie Maines and Martie Maguire—pose with their trophies at the 49th Grammy Awards in Los Angeles Sunday. AFP

"Well, to quote the great Simpsons'...Homer, Bart," she said, invoking a character from "The Simpsons" TV show known for his glowering laugh.

"Just kidding," added Maines. "A lot of people just turned their TVs off right now. It's very early for that."

Bandmate Emily Robison noted, "We wouldn't have done this album without everything we were through, so we have no regrets."

All the trophies collected by the Dixie Chicks (who shared song of the year honors with songwriter Dan Wilson), Ryan and the Chili Peppers came away all in the evening's old-school feel.

49th year

The show often devoted to the Grammys embraced its baby boomer roots as to its 49th year. Maybe the recording academy was trying to relive the industry's glory years—2000 was a sharp downturn in record sales, a decline that seems to grow each year as fans flock to the Internet and even ringtones to experience their tunes.

The Grammys tried to tap that new technology with its "My Grammy Moment" moment, in which three unknown singers send the the chance to perform on stage with Justin Timberlake. Viewers determined the winner by voting on the Internet, and text messaging, but the winner's performance was forgettable.

Though the show featured a medley with bright new stars such as John Mayer, John Legend and Bailey Rae, it relied heavily on the classics. Notables Lionel Ritchie sang his '80s hit "Hello" and Smokey Robinson sang the Motown classic "The Tracks of My Tears" in a tribute to Ahmet Ertegun, founder of Atlantic Records and Hall of Famers The Police, who split in 1984, reunited to kick off the show with their rendition of "Roxanne"—even though they were not nominated for anything.

Record and Wonder

Soon afterward, Tony Bennett and Stevie Wonder shared the honors of Wonder's "For Once In My Life" beat and best of the year's biggest songs—Sully Prudhe and Timberland's "Promiscuous" and Shakira and Wyclef Jean's "Hips Don't Lie"—for best pop vocal collaboration.

Jean Baez, Dionne Coleman, the Boom and the Grateful Dead were recognized with lifetime achievement awards.

Even some of the more contemporary artists sang songs that weren't their own. Christina Aguilera sang the late James Brown's "It's A Man's Man's Man's World" instead of her own nominated songs, while Underwood crooned the Eagles' "Desperado" and Justin Timberlake "Dust Another Rose" instead of her signature tune "Sexy, Take On Wheel," which was nominated for song of the year.

But new artists were celebrated, a lot. Chris Brown injected some hip-hop-based funk with his "Run It," while Underwood was celebrated as the best new artist. And double winners included youngsters Mayer, Ti and Lucksrik.

Other winners included kids singer Raya for best new age album for "Innerwishes," and a tie for Latin Pop Album: "Adrenaline," by Arjona, and "Limon Y Sal," by Julieta Venegas.

Shipp was the overall nominations leader with eight, but won in best R&B album for "The Breakthrough," her double-platinum triumph, plus best female R&S performance and R&B song for "Be Without You." AP

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, February 13, 2007
6th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Gen 4:1-8; 9:1-5, 10
Gospel: Mark 8:14-21

The disciples had forgotten to bring more bread and had only one loaf with them in the boat. "Now Jesus warned them, "Keep your eyes open and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod." And they said to one another, "It was that we have no bread."

Aware of this, Jesus asked them, "Why are you talking about the reason you are short of? Do you not see or understand? Are your minds dulled? Have you eyes but don't see and ears but don't hear? And do you not remember when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand? How many baskets full of leftovers did you collect?" They answered, "Twelve." "And having seven for the four thousand, how many wicker baskets of leftovers did you collect?" They answered, "Seven." Then Jesus said to them, "Do you still not understand?"

Commentary:

Pope Benedict XVI: And when [Noah] left the ark, God's heart is grieved. But no man finds favor with God. The man is blind. He is told to build an ark and save something of each animal thing, and along with his family he will be saved while the rest of the earth is purified and turned anew. Noah obeys, the ark is made and the waters come.

The disciples forget to bring bread except for the one loaf. Here Jesus is in the heart of his disciples'. Jesus warns them to be on their guard—to stay—against the leaven of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod—as do their sin and unbelief. If you don't see, for we are of short of understand, yet you don't. God's love is enough for all the whole world. Don't we understand that until God's love is sufficient in sharing and sustenance that a hand on sharing enough? And there is not in use, violence, theft, lies and unsated maintenance of religious worship that does not have this relentless thirst at its core.

Christian Reflection: Fr. A Rodriguez, MJ, in "Daily Missalette, Quezon City, 2007, p. 1. Fr. A. Rodriguez, MJ, is a member of the Missionaries of Jesus. Visit their website at http://www.missionariesofjesus.org.ph/index.htm or e-mail them at http://www.missionariesofjesus.org.ph/Contact.htm#contact.htm in the Philippines.

Gov't vows 'full cooperation' with UN rights prober

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE GOVERNMENT YESTERDAY pledged full cooperation with the United Nations as a special UN human rights envoy began a mission to investigate the wave of political murders in the country.

"We welcome the UN move to the Philippines in the spirit of truth and justice that President Macapagal-Arroyo has always stood for," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said in a statement.

"We support justice to all aspects and the government shall extend to the UN team all the assistance it needs to conduct a fruitful and fair search for the truth," he added.

Bunye said the President trusts the man had condemned the killings and had taken every means to get to their root and bring the perpetrators to justice.

"It's unfortunate that government efforts in this direction were hampered by the lack of witnesses and the cooperation of the victims' families as well as the militant groups," he said.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights' special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Philip Alston, arrived in Manila yesterday and paid a courtesy call on Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo.

"Alston[ ] expressed his gratitude for the unlimited access and support that the Philippine government is according his mission," spokesperson Gloria Q. Jacobo said.

Romulo cited the abolition of the death penalty as proof of the government's commitment to human rights, Jacobo said.

The Ad Hoc group Bayan, claiming that 1866 of its members were among the dead, said its representatives had already met with Alston to submit documentation on the killings.

According to local rights monitors, more than 800 political activists, human rights workers, trade union officials, lawyers and judges have been murdered in the Philippines since Ms Arroyo came to power in 2001.

Most of the victims were leftist figures and some had been accused by the military of links with Maoist guerillas waging an almost four-decade insurgency.

During the nine-day visit, Alston is expected to meet with retired Supreme Court Justice Jose Melo, who will earlier investigated the killings and submitted a report to Ms Arroyo.

Alston, an Australian-born international lawyer who took up his post in 2004, has been an adviser to groups such as Amnesty International and the International Commission of Jurists. With reports from Cynthia D. Balana and AFP

GMA for rebid of Transco grid

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO ON Monday said she wanted a retrobbing of the country's power grid following four failed attempts to privatize the system.

"I'm leaning toward a rebidding," the President said when asked about the failure of the latest attempt to privatize the National Transmission Corp. (Transco).

An auction for the 25-year license to run the country's estimated $27 billion power grid was declared a failure on Feb. 5 after only one of three potential bidders made a formal offer.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said at the time the government may resort to a negotiated deal to privatize the power grid, although he added that another round of bidding remained an option.

The group of Philippine investment firm Citadel Holdings Inc. and Texas IPR of Italy was the only bidder in the auction.

Two other bidders – a consortium comprising Trinoma Holdings Corp., Malaysia's Syarikat National Bhd and Newbridge Asia B LP and the group Monte Oro Grid Resources Corp. and Hans Grid Corp. of China – failed to come up with offers.

The government had to be part postponed the bidding due to technical and legal issues. AFP

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Point page A-1

an earned guarantee money in Laguna. It's a job that, she says, she got because "I begged for it."

"I gave all my salaries to my mother because my father is gone," she says. Her father, a truck driver, died at the age of 39, also of heart disease.

With marriage at stake, she says her initial assignment was just to fold the ends of garments. She was assisted to sew, which became her next task.

But the disease would manifest itself soon.

"Whenever I lift things, I become too weak and tired," she says.

She stopped working as the bouts with fatigue and exhaustion grew more frequent.

Weeks after her illness forced her to quit her job, Flordeliza found herself in the corridor of a hospital in Zambales. It was there that Valeroso found her alone in a wheelchair.

Valeroso sought the help of her brother-in-law, Dr. Raul Sip, who suggested that Flordeliza be given a medical test. Valeroso brought Flordeliza to the PHC, where she said she was told, "My heart is getting larger."

Open heart surgery

Flordeliza is awaiting open heart surgery that, at the PHC, normally costs P200,000 and up to P1 million in more expensive hospitals.

Asked if she feels nervous about the

RACQUEL Ludringan before she was brought to the Philippine Heart Center for court Wednesday. She underwent successful heart surgery.

surgery, Flordeliza just giggles and shakes her head. "I'm not afraid. I'm just hopeful," she says.

She doesn't have to worry about the costs.

Valeroso's foundation has an arrangement with the PHC for discounts and a waiving money from donors in the United States.

It's Valeroso that does the worrying, especially now that her foundation has started helping heart patients. She's been bringing the poor of Zambales to doctors and hospitals, but never someone suffering from a heart disease.

It's work that started when Valeroso, who is from The Netherlands, felt depressed at seeing the same poverty in the Philippines when she started to live here with husband Raul, an engineer, in 2002.

"I felt I must do something," she says. "I can run off the TV if I see those depressing things, but I can't run off what I see outside."

The first heart disease case her foundation brought to the PHC was that of Raquel Ludringan, 31, also from San Marcelino, Zambales.

It was a case close for Valeroso and her foundation.

"We hadn't handled heart cases before," she says. "I wished not of nothing."

She just plunged into it, finding herself at the PHC asking anyone she met there, "Can I talk to a surgeon?" The persistence paid off and led to the office of Dr. Lodgerio Torres, a heart specialist and PHC director.

First heart patient

Raquel, Valeroso's first heart patient, was brought in for tests.

They showed that Raquel had congenital heart disease, like Flordeliza. But unlike Flordeliza's, Raquel's case was inoperable.

Surgery won't save her life, but constant medications, and direct oxygen inhalation, could prolong it. "For how long, I can't tell," says Raquel in a phone interview.

Medicine and oxygen tanks are delivered to her home in the mountains of San Marcelino, where she lives, every week.

Raquel also didn't know what was wrong with her when she got tired for no reason at all.

Her brother died, at 6, of heart disease and her sister, Annalyn Ramos, has a rheumatic heart. But Raquel didn't see the link in her medical condition.

So she consulted doctors. "They told me at first that it was asthma," she says.

The diseases didn't get in the way of her work at Texas Instruments in Baguio City. "I felt strong then," she says. "I was fit."

But in June 2003, eight after she gave birth to her first baby, after eight years of marriage as a patient, the disease started to wreak havoc on her body.

Nauseating, she says there are times when she's too weak to even put food in her mouth.

Like a miracle

Raquel doesn't struggle from what she describes as the miracle that came the way of her sister.

In 1998, Annalisa was given only up to six months to live. "Now she's still around," says Raquel.

Irene Valeroso, 44, says she believes in miracles, too. The miracle, she says, is finding people who "have a heart for others."

One of those people, she says, is Torres, who returned to the Philippines in 1971 after specializing at the Harvard Medical School in the United States.

He didn't have to, but he says he came back, "amid all the chaos then," to fulfill a promise he made to himself.

He, and other fellow doctors, are pioneers of the PHC which was inaugurated by former First Lady Imelda Marcos on Feb. 14, 1975.

FLORDELIZA Nacebid with Helmuth Brunner, a German who helps raise funds for the Lotus Foundation Inc. "The picture was taken prior to Flordeliza's confinement at the Philippine Heart Center. Brunner started a foundation in Germany, called Lotus Hilfsprogramme, to complement the operations of Lotus in the Philippines.

Those days, Torres recalls, PHC was barely filled with patients for heart surgery. "In 1975, we had in-house people to have open-heart surgery," he says.

Normal day at heart center

Nowadays, the queue of people waiting on patients inside intensive care units (ICU) is about 300 meters long and winding down the street, kept in order by a lone guard.

There are men, women and children waiting for their turn in hallway pegets to close proof that cures or their loved ones, one too good to afford treatment for heart disease.

Rose Claveja, PHC social welfare officials, says the hospital gets 120 to 150 new cases a day. Screening chatty patients takes all day, and the line grows longer daily, she says.

According to the Department of Health, at least 38 percent of Filipinos who die every year from diseases succumb to some form of heart ailment.

Torres says the waiting time for surgery for the poor could last months because of several delays, mainly lack of funds.

He says the PHC subsidizes its charity cases through revenue from paying patients.

Gov't subsidy not enough

The P156 million that the government gives a year simply isn't enough, says Torres, as the hospital keeps a patient ratio of 90 percent paying and 10 percent charity.

"It used to be 60-40," says Torres.

Claveja says the easing said has its rewards, though.

One of them, she says, are "patients who are getting well and saying thank you."

"At the end of the day, we thank God that it's not us who are out there. We thank God we don't have that kind of disease," says Claveja.

Such expressions of gratitude are abundant at the PHC.

A woman stops Irene Valeroso at a crowded PHC corridor. Flordeliza's son, Geremy Al mario, 6, who underwent open-heart surgery and checked out on Jan. 30.

"I just wanted to thank you," the woman tells Valeroso as her son played by her side.

God's work

Valeroso recalls praying for the boy, who she says could barely move his legs when he was first admitted to the PHC.

"This is really God's work," Valeroso tells the woman.

Torres considers the expressions of gratitude just as rewarding as his being appointed PHC director.

On an ordinary day, he says, he'll do the rounds and get thanked by patients, who are recuperating from successful surgeries, and their relatives.

He also gets calls from congressmen, senators and governors who would thank him for successful surgeries on patients they had endorsed to the PHC.

"What more can you ask for?" he says. "Isn't that enough?"

For Irene Valeroso, it's about saving lives.

"If we can save one life, saves the world's, lately," she says, quoting a line from her favorite movie, "Schindler's List."

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Corrections

IN THE JAN. 13 issue, an article on Page A1—"P10,000 plate dinner for Lucero a big hit"—misstated the name of the party under which senatorial stockbiter Loren Legarda is running. Legarda is running under the Nationalist—not National—People's Coalition.

IN THE JAN. 31 issue, the "Political Tidbits" column of Belinda Olivares-Cunanan—"Connie Orly one good story"—erroneously attributed the saying, "All politics is local." The mantra came from former US Speaker Thomas O'Neill Jr., not Newt Gingrich.

IN THE FEB. 9 issue, a front-page article—"Sakwala appointed Palace chief of staff"—announced the age of newly appointed Presidential Chief of Staff Jose Ma. Sison "Joey" Sakwala. Born on Oct. 25, 1961, Sakwala is 45—not 46—years old.

IN RECENT ISSUES, several articles and captions mistreated the first name of the general who was part of the peace solution designed by the Moro National Liberation Front in Basilan, Sulu, last Feb. 2. He is Maj. Gen. Ben—not Benjamin—Dolorfino.

IN THE Feb. 12 issue, a headline on Page A18, "Callaway points to help girl found dead in fire," should have read "Points to help mother of girl found dead in fire."

Readers may send their requests for corrections of factual errors or writings to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PIA Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Maniquis Street, MAKATI City, fax no. 892-4747 or e-mail to inq@inq7.net or corr@inq.net.
Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Letters Editor. The reader's ombudsman, e-mail address: readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph or fax this 897-4733 or, alternatively, may phone number 1-897-8000 Local 2342.

2 try to fly on 1 ticket

CEBU PACIFIC (5J) STAFF DID A double take on Saturday when they noticed they had only two passengers on board a Manila-Dumaguete flight.

Apparently, two brothers arranged a friend's Cebu Pacific flight (5J 402) using a single electronic ticket, a discrepancy that delayed the weekend flight by more than three hours prompting the pilot to note the passenger log page remained blank for eight rows.

Regor Gerard, native Bajau boys, 17, and his younger brother, Ishid, were offloaded from the plane after airline staff found the latter was using a seat that was supposed to be vacant. Regor paid for both his boarding pass.

The brothers, currently in their early 20s and Bajau Grande Island natives, were bound at the Manila Domestic Airport, late charges of estafa, said the defendant's chief prosecutor, Jose Princess.

Based on information relayed by an airline security officer to police, Regor checked in at 4 a.m. for his 8:15 a.m. flight on Saturday, using an e-ticket he had purchased at a promotional P1,042.

Ishid arrived at around 6:30 a.m. and entered the pre-departure area as a chance passenger.

We smelled into the check-in area when the panel at the entrance looking," Princess said.

Ishid then borrowed his brother's e-ticket and went to the Cebu Pacific counter where he presented it to the flight bureau and said that he lost his boarding pass, police said.

It was during the head count that the two brothers were found and were ordered off the aircraft.

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Cebu ship catches fire

CEBU CITY—A FIRE BROKE OUT IN A SMALL cargo-cum-vessel while docking Lapu-Lapu City (Cebu) Wharf in Mandaue City.

Mandaue Fire District Chief Insp. Dante Maceil said the blaze in the M/V Manila Bay 1 and forty hectares controlled by welding work being done in the cabin area of the ship.

The Cebu A. Gothong Lines management has yet to issue a statement on the fire.

A Gothong employee said the vessel was undergoing its annual drydocking for several days. The Manila Bay 1 sails between Cebu and Masbate twice a week. —Rommel Rapadas con, Inquirer Visayas

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STATEMENT OF GRATITUDE AND COMMITMENT

The Department of Labor and Employment, including its attached agencies – the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), the Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration (OWWA) and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) –believe that:

- The true measure of gainful overseas employment is not simply in the number of jobs abroad that are open to our workers but also the quality of foreign employment and employers who hire them.
- Notwithstanding market forces in global migration, it remains the government's full responsibility to ascertain conditions in these markets and adopt safeguards to protect the interests and welfare of our workers.
- Overseas employment is an evolving program, which is directly affected by current global realities, trends, and events. Tough policy decisions have to be made on where we would like to move this program forward with the protection, safety and welfare of the Filipino overseas worker as our overarching goal.

These principles have led us to re-examine the deployment of Filipino household services workers abroad. Over the years, both the DFA and DOLE have seen a steadfast increase in welfare cases connected with this female-dominated sector. **Low wages, sub-human living conditions, arbitrary salary deductions, physical abuse,** and worse, cases of **rape and sexual molestation** – these are the realities that compelled the Philippine government through DOLE to introduce reforms so we could leave the low-end market for domestic helpers behind us.

Our package of reform measures for our Household Service Workers (HSWs) consists of –

1. Increasing the HSWs' minimum salary from US$200 to US$400;
2. Requiring a higher minimum age for deployment of HSWs from 18 to 23;
3. Prohibiting the collection of placement fees from HSWs, whether done prior to departure or on-site through salary deduction;
4. Requiring the possession of TESDA Household Services National Certificate II and attendance at the Language and Culture Orientation program provided for free by OWWA as assurances to the foreign employer of our HSWs' competency and capacity to adapt.

These reforms are apart from other measures that will likewise enhance the protection given to our OFWs.

Thus, in due time, we shall:

- overhaul the present **system of Pre-Departure Orientation Seminars** (P-DOS) so that they will truly assist and facilitate the HSWs' entry into their foreign workplaces;
- adopt an enhanced **system of OFW reintegration** that will fully benefit individual OFWs, their communities and the nation as a whole;
- adopt measures aimed at ensuring **the highest degree of professionalism and ethical conduct** in the placement of OFWs, locally and overseas;
- tighten **anti-illegal recruitment** and other pre-employment measures so that Filipino workers are protected even before they apply for foreign work;
- introduce innovations in the POEA **dispute resolution system** to make it fast and effective despite the deployment overseas of complaining witnesses.

These tasks are difficult enough **without having to parry blows from some industry players who are mainly motivated by economic self-interests.** This is why we are thankful to the groups below for their support to the cause of looking after the best interests of our OFWs by reducing the chance that they would be exploited in their overseas jobs.

GROUPS/SECTORS WHO HAVE EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR THE NEW POLICY REFORMS ON HOUSEHOLD SERVICE WORKERS (HSWs)
As of 12 FEBRUARY 2007

Episcopal Commission for Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, CBCP
Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP)
Federation of Free Workers (FFW)
National Confederation of Labor (NCL)
Philippine Government Employees Association (PGEA)
National Congress of Unions in the Sugar Industry in the Philippines (NACUSIP)
Philippine Association of Legal Service Contractors (Phi.ELCON)
National Association of Trade Unions (NATU)
Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP)
Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI)
Philippine Transport General Workers Organization (PTGWO)
Philippines Migrants Rights Watch (PMRW) (with member organizations: Apostleship of the Sea-Manila (ACS), Development Action for Women Network (DAWN), CBCP-Episcopal Commission on Migrant Advocacy (CMA), Scalabrini Migration Center (SMC), Scalabrini Center for People on the Move (SCPM), International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)
Association for Professionalism in Overseas Employment Inc. (ASPROE)
Confederation of Filipino Overseas Workers (COFW) - HK
Filipino Community Service Network (FILCOMSN) - HK
United Filipino Workers Association - HK
Integrated Midwives Association of the Philippines - HK
DOMC-HK (SOLE-OWWA Tulay Mismo#6)
Bisig Ta Buwans Association - HK
Arati Ti Visaya - HK
Iloilo Philippines - HK
Uating Manggagawa Pinoy Abroad (UMPA) - HK
Migrant Ilonggo International Association - HK
Bohol HK Association
Allimonan Quezon Association - HK
Filipino Community Organizations Alliance (FILCOM on QATAR - composed of 52 Filipino Organizations
Order of the Knights of Rizal - Middle East & Africa Region
Cabalen Agumin Capampangan, KSA
Filipino Community – Jubail, Eastern Province, KSA
Kawanggan ng DPW, KSA
El Nenos Group in Saudi Arabia - Riyadh and Al Khobar, KSA
Filipino Ranger Brokers of Western Region (Ranger) - Al Khobar, KSA
Philippine Society of Mechanical Engineers - KSA Chapter
Philippine Institute of Civil Engineers - Eastern Province, KSA
Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants - KSA (Eastern Province) Chapter
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United Bagobo-Tagabawa Kadtabanan Association (UBKA)
Bagong Bond Sam, Jeddah
Association of Cebuano Expatriates
Circulo Ilonggo, Saudi Arabia
BICA-MAA
Boholano Community in Jeddah
Association of Manila Engineers and Architects, Jeddah
PAMAC International
PHILMASA International
Association of Filipino Civil Engineers, Western Region, KSA
Pangasinan Saudi Workers Association
Philippine Nurses Brotherhood, Red Sea Chapter
Agumin Kapampangan - Taipei Chapter
Bicol Association in Taipei
Filipinos Married to Taiwanese Association
OFW Family Club, Taiwan
Frontier Bisaya International - Taiwan
Tandrac Filipino Community
The United Nonen Association in Taiwan
Filipino Community Organization in Libya (FILCOL)
Filipino Muslim Community Consultative Council (FMCC) in Libya
Filipino Club of Ras Al Khaimah, UAE
Lighthorn International Filipino Photographers Guild, Dubai, UAE
World International Ministry, Dubai - UAE
Philippine Health Care Providers, Dubai, UAE
Central Philippine University Alumni Association, Dubai, UAE
CADD Group, Dubai, UAE
United Filipino Association of Fujairah, UAE
Ajaba Pro Omega, Dubai, UAE
Filipino Association of Umm Al Quwain, UAE
Filipino Bowling Club, Dubai, UAE
Filipino Scuba Divers Club, Dubai, UAE
International Alliance of Filipino Table Tennis Association, Dubai - UAE
Kalinaw Kapit-bisig Foundation, Dubai, UAE
Lingkod OFW, Dubai, UAE
Manatee Community, Dubai, UAE
Pinoy Expats Auto Club, Dubai, UAE
Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants, Dubai Chapter
Shariah Filipino Bowling Club, Sharjah, UAE
Agumin Kapampangan, Dubai, UAE
Filipino Press Club, Dubai, UAE
Filipino Scout Club in Oman
Filipino Community Leaders, Religious Groups and OFW Organizations in Korea
Solid Filipino Migrant Association (SOFUMA) – Tokyo, Japan

Mabuhay ang Manggagawang Pilipino, sa ating bayan at sa bawat sulok ng mundo!

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

PHILIPPINE OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT ADMINISTRATION

OVERSEAS WORKERS WELFARE ADMINISTRATION

TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

No song and dance for Unity ticket

By Cid C. Cabuenas@p.h

DON'T EXPECT A BRASS BAND AND GIANT fly-clad women when administration-backed candidates visit your town during the campaign period.

Like reformist bowling their leader, each Team Unity candidate will come equipped with a mobile kit composed of a projector, a video player and DVDs of the ticket's platform and profiles of the administration candidates.

In an interview with the business, especially municipal officials and Team Unity were making the "high-tech" route in the May elections to elevate the campaign to a higher standard.

"We agreed that it's about time we raised the level of campaigning after 6 unsuccessful elections of using and dance routines and mudslinging. We want it to have some meaning, not just entertainment," said Gonzalez, a veteran of the campaign trail in both the Estrada and Arroyo administrations.

"We have one advantage and that is our base is broader compared to the 6 base good of running the President. We aim to neutralize the electronic media in sending our message."

Video presentation

Based on its strategy, a Team Unity candidate (or administration) would set an election of 15- to 20-minute video presentation where he would introduce Team Unity's platform and the 11 other candidates.

Radio video would be keyed to the candidate making the presentation show interviews like video sets shot only starring prominent Mabuhayang's visual director Lupita Aquino Kashiwahara.

Team Unity hopes to maximize the administration's strong ties with local government leaders, who are expected to bring in 50 to 70 leaders from their respective areas to attend the sessions.

Spreading the message

"We hope the local leaders would bring the message to their constituents," said Gonzalez. The so-called "Bulong-bulong" sessions will start in Laguna on Feb. 22.

Gonzalez said Team Unity's campaign theme would focus on opportunity in the campaign.

"We will just be there for the kickoff and the windup," he said.

Gonzalez said three-would allow the team to cover more areas at costs less than those of traditional political rallies, where all the candidates converge on a stage.

Gonzalez stressed that these assemblies, to be limited to one a week, would be "slim and trim" with a very limited number of entertainers on stage.

Limited role for GMA

Team Unity, which has three opposition stalwarts on its roster, would be divided into four teams of three members each.

Gonzalez said President Macapagal-Arroyo would limit her appearances in the campaign.

"She will just be there for the kickoff and the windup," he said.

SENATE PRESIDENT MANUEL VILLAR holds up his certificate of candidacy for senator at the Comelec office Monday. With him are his wife, Rep. Cynthia Villar, and children. Also cheering their support are Sen. Pia Cayetano and Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano, who is also running for senator. ARNOLD ALMACEN

Circus comes to town

By Inquirer staff

Six Team Unity candidates under the so-called "Team Unity circus"—a hybrid show of allies and critics. [See exhibit story on Page A2.]

After announcing that the administration's 12th senatorial slot had gone to Sultan Aminoal Hassan III of Sulu, Mr. Arroyo had her senatorial slate starring with laughter when she sang the campaign jingle of her television show-cum-talk-fest Rep. Miguel "Migz" Zubiri.

"Team Unity, Team Unity, Team Unity, Team Unity, Team Unity!" the President chanted.

Then the ruling off the course of all the candidates, starting with controversial Sen. Miguel de Angelo whose the dubbed "Angelo ng Pilipinas," an allusion to his campaign slogan, "Angelo ng Bulilit."

She described Rep. Prospero de Nograles as "palagi ngang buhay ang laging nagpapa-sikat" and said seemingly in Filipino: "Let's plant him in the first row."

Turning to her former chief of staff, Michael Defensor, the Arroyo called him, "Kil (Bonifacio), who the real could be relied upon to spearhead the administration's housing program and agrarian reform.

Mayo ignored

"We stressed the future of the nation (to them)," she said, referring to the 12 candidates.

At the Comelec, newsmen crowded around to capture the moment of the Megastar and the first for All Seasons in its entirety.

But even a recent memo issued by Comelec officials prohibiting their staff from leaving their posts when politicians or celebrities come would stop employees from holding out of their chairs and receiving the visitors.

Pilipino TV's eminent pointed over there, some of the dozens of employees deviated. Others decided to find the camera would not catch them.

"They can't stop us if we want to see celebrities to pursue. Besides, it's our lunch break now," one female employee said.

She and the others looked giddy at having shaken the hands of Bisaya and Villar. But a few guard for pictures with their favs.

Campaign season has begun

Even on the eighth floor of the Comelec building, employees took up stamps, pens, fans to get a close view of the celebrities and the politicians.

Outside the Comelec building, it was as if the campaign season had begun as a sea of streamers and T-shirts of various candidates filled the streets.

Earlier, the streets throbbed with the drums of the military bands as members of Team Unity faced lines at the circle by Manila Orchestra.

Defensor's campaign posters were hung on nearly every lamppost in the area. His pink shirt-clad supporters held up posters bearing his "Walang Iwi" slogan.

Defensor said there was no intention to engage his fellow candidates.

Last on file

But in the end, it was clear the stars like Bisaya and Villar had commanded the greatest attention.

Barring suppression of Senate President Manuel Villar, it will take him to win the 12th and last senatorial slot in the May 14 elections.

Aside from Villar, the Team Unity senatorial candidates are Defensor, Nograles, Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri, Rep. Prospero de Nograles, Rep. Miguel Zubiri, Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri, Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri, Rep. Juan

Will 'Boom Tarat Tarat' win votes for politicos?

Pronagapa.ph

ular being equal, political leaders might spoil the silliness for outgoing Congressman Jose Miguel "Joeper" Zubiri and French "Chic" Escudero and former lawmaker Michael "Ike" Defensor.

Escudero, who is running under the United Opposition banner, could be taken "Bagul," a song popularized by the rock band Eraserheads, for its "catchy tune that appeals to the younger crowd."

He said that against his "Bagul," fellow senatorial Defensor and Zubiri had chosen the tune "Para Sa'yo" of bossing icon Manny Pacquiao and comedian Willie Revillame's novelty song, "Boom Tarat Tarat."

"This is a small world (so my team each other's (in-jokes)," Escudero said in television yesterday. "I think it will be a question of can (this) try to spread (the jingles) and let them be heard all around the country."

To the foreign lawmaker, Defensor and Zubiri are friends, ex-classmates. Both belonged to the Spin Boys—a group of young opposition congressmen during the former administration.

Available as ring tones

Escudero, on the other hand, was part of its counterpart, Bright Boys, which was formed to engage Defensor and company in debates on proposed Charter amendments.

The Bright and Spin Boys have grown older, and their senior has become Gigger.

At 37, Escudero still looks on the youth vote to lend him a seat in the Senate like "Bagul" fingle is expected to be available for downloading on his website "www.chiescudero.com" beginning today, the start of the campaign period.

Versions of the single will be available as cell phone ring tones or played on radio and television as paid advertisements. Escudero promised to abide by the legal prescriptions of only 120 minutes of ads on TV and 180 minutes of ads on radio throughout the campaign period.

Can reach millions

Escudero said his website could reach between 300,000 and two million people.

The website is set to hold at 8 p.m. today a one-time, "online press conference" between the candidates and reporters here and abroad.

The chat room provided by www.gelacy.com will also focus on absentee voters in the United States, the Middle East and Hong Kong, according to Melmo Rondez, who designed the website.

"(The website) basically shows the relatively young orientation of our campaign," Escudero said. "We are taking advantage of existing and developing technologies."

Beyond the intentions of the Internet campaigns, Escudero insisted that victory or defeat would still depend on whether a candidate could "provide inspiration to our people and lead by example."

ALL IN THE FAMILY (the ex, present and future of Philippine politics)

ZAMBALES Gov. Vic Magsaysay shows off his certificate of candidacy. He was accompanied to the Comelec by his family including his cousin, Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. (left).

PRESIDENT MACAPAGA
Secretary Bendix Pana

MIGZ Defensor with wife Jolie, daughter Mikee and father, Quezon City Rep. Mat Defensor, at the Comelec.

INDEPENDENT senatorial candidate actor Richard Gomez leaves the Comelec office with wife Lucy Torres after filing his certificate of candidacy.

Government Warning: Cigarette sm

...d at MIGSO awards rite Kampi...ice Manuel Carmelotaveriño Interior ...nd Rep. Luis Villafuerte, right, at the Manila Hotel.

SEN. EDGARDO Angara and wife, Gloria, hold up their graduation certificate, who is showing his late's certificate of candidacy outside the Comelec office.

OPPOSITION Rep. Jose Peter Cayetano makes his bid for the Senate official. He is flanked by Ironside, Sen. Francisco, Rep. Joel Villanueva, Sen. Panfilo Lacson...with Luis Cayetano and sister Sen. Pia Cayetano.

No photo-ops with Erap ...

From page A1

off" or co-related through maintenance of his family rules are also in politics because "there can be no substitute for Erap's experience and charisma."

Citing an alleged communist plot to assassinate Estrada, the Philippine National Police (PNP) has limited steps Feb. 6 his visitors to members of his immediate family and to only one lawyer per visit.

In addition, all the cell phones of Estrada have been confiscated, according to Rodriguez.

He said these measures, which were not applied to Estrada during the 2004 presidential election, showed that "this administration just wants to weaken the opposition by making Erap incommunicado."

Now, the lawmaker, that the PNP began imposing the new restrictions without any stated reason, Rodriguez said.

The Estrada camp aired these complaints to the press on Wednesday and only on the following day did Malacañang, through National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales, speak of an alleged communist day plot against the 69-year-old opposition leader, Rodriguez said.

Security for Estrada was at right last week that even Senate President Manuel Villar was turned from entering the Tanay rest house.

Get permit first

But visitors, including candidates in the May elections, can now visit Estrada, the PNP said yesterday.

But only if the visitors could get permission from the PNP head, said Chief Supt. Samuel Pagtilan, the PNP spokesperson.

"To avoid any inconvenience, our advice: political personalities and other visitors to secure their request (to see Estrada) through the PSPO (Police Security Protection Office)," Pagtilan told reporters yesterday.

Once a request is received by the PSPO, Pagtilan said it would depend on PSP Director General Oscar Calderon whether or not to grant the request.

The PSPO is the unit that is assigned to guard Estrada in Tanay.

"It was a desperate move to pressure or delay or from completing our ceremonial slate (in time for the deadline for the filing of the candidacies yesterday)," Rodriguez said of the restrictions.

The United Opposition was able to complete its ceremonial slate on Tuesday.

"But where it has succeeded is (in the fact that we still don't have a slate campaign strategy because we have not yet totally reconciled with President Estrada," Rodriguez said.

An affidavit of the communist-led National Democratic Front tabled the allegation of Gonzales that the New People's Army was planning to assassinate President Macapagal-Arroyo, Estrada, and top Malacañang and military officials.

Fidel V. Agcaoili, chair of the PEP-Human Rights Committee, said in an e-mail from Utrecht, the Netherlands, that the "malicious intent of Gonzales to re... present Estrada from effectively helping opposition candidates in the forthcoming elections."

Estrada's legal team in his first, war-old plunder trial formally asked the Sandiganbayan antigraft court to summon Gonzales—even to a closed-door hearing...for "clarification" regarding the "new, unprecedented restrictions."

"Why is the principal accused being isolated?" wondered lawyer Jose Sagmegin on urgent motion.

"We need to know the people behind this new outlandish and unconstitutional restriction and why the same are being imposed. The usual suspect is a supposedly many official, which we cannot believe, and he should be heard here," Sagmegin said.

The motion said Estrada needed to be "clarified whether the denial of the basic human and constitutional right to confer with counsel, and trust people and express his views, may be sanctioned by the prosecution, this court, and the administration."

With a report from Joelle P. Malaluan Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Vol. 23 No. 47

Choosing right

FINALLY, THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE UNITED Opposition have completed their senatorial tickets, and everything is set for the grand electoral battle ahead. It must come as a relief to the more intelligent, discerning voters that the two groups have not yielded to the temptation to pack their tickets with many show biz and sports celebrities whose only asset is their popularity.

EDITORIAL

Voters have to be reminded that senators are among the most powerful elective officials of the country and that they perform very important tasks. The Senate has been a breeding ground of presidents, and one of the senators who will be elected this year may run for president in 2010. It is thus imperative that the voters choose the 12 best and brightest, the most competent and most honorable and those with proven dedication to the country.

The Senate had its historical origins in the Roman Senate, the main governing council of both the Roman Republic and the empire. "Senate" comes from the Latin *senex*, meaning old man or elder. Senators from the 2nd century AD onwards were called *clari* (variously interpreted as famous, illustrious, distinguished or noble). Not just any celebrity could become a Roman senator.

The Senate had considerable clout in Roman politics. It sent and received ambassadors and appointed officials to manage public funds. It conducted wars and appropriated public funds. It authorized the city's chief magistrates, the consuls, to commission a dictator during a state of emergency.

The United States adopted the concept of the Roman Senate and provided for the election of two senators from each state for a six-year term. In the first US Senate, the senators were divided into three classes by lot, with the first class serving a two-year term; the second, four years; and the third, six years. The framers of the US Constitution hoped that the biennial elections would bring stability to the Senate and the other branches of the government.

The Senate is the upper hall of the US Congress (the other one is the House of Representatives) which passes laws and resolutions. The Senate has the sole power to try impeachment cases. It ratifies treaties entered into by the president and gives its advice and consent to the appointments of ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls, justices of the Supreme Court and all other officers.

The Philippines basically adopted the concept of the US Senate. The Philippine Legislature, composed of the Senate and the House of Representatives, was restored under the 1935 Law passed in 1935. The Legislature was succeeded in 1935 by the National Assembly upon the inauguration of the Philippine Commonwealth. President Ferdinand E. Marcos abolished Congress in 1972 when he declared martial law, but the new regime installed by the Edsa Revolution in 1986 restored the bicameral Congress.

The Senate was a gathering of the best and the brightest, the wisest, most competent politicians and legislators of the country during the Commonwealth and pre-martial law eras. Men and women who distinguished themselves in law, economics, business, foreign service, education, science and the other professions have graced its halls. People like Quezon, Osmeña, Recto, Tañada, Gruss, Ibañez, Sumulong, Tolentino, Puyat, Salonga and Aquino contributed their expertise in the drafting of the nation's laws.

The Senate, home of censors and debaters, has been performing effectively its role in the system of checks and balances in our government by checking abuses in the exercise of executive power.

It was in 1992 that show biz and sports celebrities began their entry into the halls of the Senate. Most of them won largely because of their popularity and name recall. Some of them quickly became members of the "*sanito de silencio*" who did not contribute anything to the debates and discussions in what is basically a "speaking club." After all, the Senate is part of a parliament, a word which comes from parlement, which in turn comes from parler, French for to talk.

If we have discussed the historical background of the Senate at length, it is because we want to impress upon the voters who will soon make their choices the importance of choosing the right people to be our senators in the next six years. Voters need not limit their choices to the two principal tickets. Other groups may have better candidates or allies. The nation deserves nothing but the best people to sit in the august hall of the Senate.

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A tale of 12 cities

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

IS ANYONE HEEDING TOUCH OF EVILS CRYing over cities that just-ballot fixer sent through Congress before a adjournment?

In 1991, we had 60 cities, many of dubious viability by 2005, the number almost doubled to 114. After Tagaytay, Santa Rosa and Mega-manila behind the club, the total rose to 117. The "strained the national government's ability to finances such local government units," the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank noted. But "the small size of LGUs prevent them from generating their own resources."

The Congress approved 33 more "city candidates" (Bongao; Bongao; Bongao; Bongao; Bongao; Cabadbaran (Bamay); Lamitan (Basilan); Tandag (Surigao del Sur); Bayugan (Agusan del Sur); Cotabato (Agusan del Norte); and Bayugan (Eastern Samar).

Those 33 add to bigger numerical revenue allotments (IRAs), shorthand fans. Alfredo Lim. "If those municipalities cannot even manage to meet the basic income requirement (set by RA 9009), how can they be expected to perform and deliver as cities?" the League of Cities of the Philippines snapped back. "The award increases of a few are the only ingredients needed to do not a rational and sensible law."

The 12 got this far because Congress watered down RA 9009's criteria for minimum economic tests. The measure for to "the club" now from P20 million to P100 million in, mark this well, locally-generated income.

Tagaig, Santa Rosa and Mega-manila were anecdotes on pursuing local taxes without a whimper, thereby creating a huge economic pie. The 12 will help themselves from the common IRA kitties. But first cities will be drained from the club. Cities' income drastically dropped Muslim provinces or four and fifth-class towns. Shows a "beggar your neighbor" policy.

IRAs are not a permanent entitlement, a UN study points out. They're to give those poorest of LGUs in five-class local revenue-collecting muscles.

But 33 cities proved otherwise (as we've seen happened). IRAs tend to serve half of local budgets. Today they account for 43 centavos of every budgeted peso.

"Unconditional grants" invariably sap accountability. And IRAs are not linked to performance. Thus, the share of locally raised taxes has dwindled, from 57 centavos out of every peso in the mid-1980s to only 20 centavos today and it is still shrinking.

How shall cities become "engines of growth," instead, they remain hooked on IRAs and slump from national pork barrel to subsidy; their officials are hard-pressed to provide residents with even basic services, since they're hands-to-tin-cup hand and raise levies less because, etc. Officials never learn how to raise by subsidizing taxes, etc.

Population, meanwhile, ratchets the pressure. Manuel Buenafe noted poverty fixed into three slums. In 2000, 3 out of every 10 Filipinos lived in urban areas; by 2030, urban residents would count at 61 million.

Mumbling "equal protection of law" Congress exempted the 12 from complying with RA 9009's criteria for high performance. It gutted standards down to mediocrity in the just the election year rinse? Or a it a deeper national rather?

Do we meet the demand for high performance by lowering hurdles instead? A shortage in basic energy was "solved" by juggling statistics on clear skies. In National Elementary Achievement Tests, poor performances led to scaling the passing mark down to 50 percent, thus dolling a "bonus" of 10 points. "The instant the attention passing score was 37.5 percent," Philippine Human Development Report found. "Whatever not kidding! Self-delusion sells short the efforts of other cities that, by dint of hard work and performance of its officials and citizens, are moving up development path-blazers."

But their packages of best governance practices, Bacolod, Naga and Iloilo are cited in the latest issue Development Bank study of "urban decline and stability" in 32 Asian countries. Among "key lessons" these three cities offer, the Asbitchies the following:

"Strict enforcement of the rule of law is common to the three cities." (No explanation for sanitary ordinances, as in Davao and Cebu.)

"All three cities underscore the active role of civil society in undertaking numerous development projects with local governments. (They systematically used) policy instruments, such as the Local Government Code and city ordinances, to open avenues not only for citizen participation but also for encouraging private sector development."

Naga City's "Citizens Charter" increased transparency and accountability of government. Procurement bids are published and effective expend, instead of spending, initiatives by citizens' local governments instituted 12 zones. Bacolod City's Business Bayanihan Center is increasing its tax base. Infact, and statistical instability are down. And so is the crime rate. And the Iloilo Metropolitan Development Council, through patient consultative efforts over a decade, put in place a coherent development plan.

Reforms were possible "as tough vision and commitment of local chief executives. But they were not Lone Ranger-type manners or governors. "Ultimate empowerment were part of the agenda of the three city governments."

Ensuring a city is more than just having IRAs to pump up a "city" shingle. Cities are changing the social fabric and culture of nations," the ADB study notes. "It is unstoppable and changing people's lives... It has elements of unpredictability and chaos."

To cope with these changes requires, nevertheless, more not self-delusion.

(E-mail: jmercado@email.com)

Footnote to a farce

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I MISSED OUT TO COMMENT ON IT LAST week, what with one thing and another happening, but it's too important to let pass.

That was the House of Representatives' ethics and privileges committee's decision to suspend Alan Peter Cayetano for 45 days. The reason, in nobody's surprise, was 33-3-1. The lone dissension came from Jose Aquino who probably said it best: "I don't want to have a part in this kangaroo court."

Cayetano was suspended for accusing Mike Arroyo, also called the First Gentleman itself, ex- also call Red Komiks native secretary Mathematic Gutierrez national security adviser, and Ronaldo Puno and Benjamin Abalos guardians of dope electronic of harboring deposits in a bank in Manila.

The only good in this is that it will probably subject Cayetano to the same scrutiny Arroyo has been subjected to. Who knows? Maybe it might even make him Sec. 1 when the smoke clears—Hey, assuming this country is able to disarm the advance of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, as I wrote about yesterday. Cayetano's suspension has not yet to be approved by Congress in plenary session. What can't? I must definitely hope it does. If only to give Cayetano more free advertisement than GMA's expensive P250 ads, which now litter the 50th games on Basketball TV like debris after a super storm, do for the administration's candidates. The opposite is simply to build Cayetano's enemy in Senator Juan Ponce Enrile's enemy in Juan de la Cruz's friend. I can only plead earnestly with our congressmen: Please oppress Cayetano some more.

That is the only good thing about it. Everything else sucks.

To begin with, the ethics and privileges committee took only to find Mike Arroyo innocent as gentleness, first or last, and Raul Gonzalez disperses justice, legal or poetic, look at the citizens that infest it and ask yourself if most of them have ever heard of the word "ethics," much less understand its meaning. You can only be certain they have heard of the word "privilege," clinging as they do to them with all their might.

While at this, the entire premise of Mike Arroyo's not against 45 consecutive days looked a class he is not a public official, he is an ordinary citizen. Therefore journalists may not simply claim good faith when they attack him, they must pay for the weapons in cash or kind. Well, if he is an ordinary citizen, why has the House ethics committee treated hearsay and hell to try to remove one of their own from their custody as if he were an absolute? The commission because he dared raise as a matter of fundamental national interest the possibility he is not just a crook but a crook important one? If I would right, a Muslim congressman attacked on ordinary citizen, in the form of a representative of Basilan, with a knife in the very presence of the Senate for indecorously contaminating her soup with bits of pork, and she never met with any sanction.

Which brings us to Constance's "crime." Did he make a mistake in identifying the deposit? Probably. Does he have the right to get a scolding? Only if the First Gentleman, one that applies to all possible deposits abroad? Absolutely it's not just he who has the right, the entire Filipino nation does. Ping Lacson did some such a review when he was on the hot seat, and, to be pointed out to me in a text message last week, every word on to file a couple of bills that would make such a blanket waiver compulsory. The bills were unheeded but he went to review them if he gets back to the Senate.

At the very least, Cayetano's mistake is an honest one. At the very most, his motivation is a laudable one. Contrast this with a Bolante you cause that remains unpunished to this day. That is an incumbent president calling up a Comelec commissioner right in the middle of canvassing and asking to vote by a million votes over a recount rival. That mistake is a thoroughly dishonest one, having as it does the gravest consequences and its perpetrator having as the chief law enforcement officer. Which one, if I remember my catechism right, is the requirements for mortal sin. And its more, sinces such, to perpetrate simply warning power at any cost. Yet Congress' ethics committee never tried to suspend its perpetrator from power, it permitted her to declare.

But to the end the worst thing about the ban Cayetano has one in the hands of his inferiors (they are by no means his peers) is that they make a farce of elections. Frankly, I don't know why we're going ape about the Mon elections. Frankly, I don't know why we're having Senatorials on the candidates like the kind and Bolante and Lacson. We already have the killings and the cheating that are making a mockery of elections; the additional ban, you can get round into office and lose it anyway on serious rules by a corrupt and ruthless administration.

We have already seen a corrupted roster of Joe Ejercito as mayor of Makati and the actual roster of Imee City Mayor Prime Trinidad and other elected public officials. We've already seen the attempted roster of Leonor Monte Abad Basal, with this holier lesser suddenly metamorphosing in the Comelec premises and the Comelec willing that a rival candidate actually secede the case. And now we see a representative originated by Congress for a crime against the people, the people declared in Mike Arroyo. Did Imee notice, mine result, to the country, it's not enough to be tossed by the entire nation? Or Joe Ejercito? Or Bolante? Or Lacson? Or Abad? Or Comelec, Congress, and whoever they'll think of next.

You don't get murdered or cheated in the polls, you'll get hammered beforehand.

Cayetano's fate in the hands of his colleagues raises doubts the validity concept of an elected official. But does why expose them to appreciate the concept of an elected official? That's big boss is not.

Arroyo's and Recto's reasoning

THE ADMINISTRATION AND OPPOSITION HAVE completed their symmetrical slates. But the line-ups remain as confusing as ever, with politicians who were once instrumental in running former President Joseph Estrada joining his coalition, while those who had been fiercely loyal to him are now running under the administration ticket. Senate President Marcelo Fernan, who headed the impeachment panel in the Senate in December 1999 when he saw that the needed number of signatures had been obtained, is a guest candidate of the Erap camp, while Public Works Secretary Jose de Venecia is running for a Senate seat. Former Senators Teresa Aquino-de Rossi and Vicente Sotto, who are the fight against opening the second envelope, have landed in the LAMMP camp, while their allies, John Osmeña and Nikki Coseteng, remain with the Erap camp. On the other hand, Sen. Edgardo Angara, who remained faithful to Estrada to the end, is now with LAMMP.

Don't rationalize the Comelec over the past few days as mere personalities or those marked as influenced who decide beyond the deadline for the substitution of candidates. Rather, it is clearly the poll body's personnel. Some recall was the major role for constituents such as Gov. Vic Sotto/governor of Cotabato, Sonia Roco and milliner Pitoy Moreno/Caloocan City. There were retired old faces such as Claudio Teehankee and Democrito, as well as trend-looking campaigners like Ernesto Maceda. But I note a few fresh faces, too. One of them is Lutgo Gon Antolin Pelaez, who landed in the Erap camp in local politics media.

With the decision of Joker Arroyo and Ralph Recto to join the administration coalition, the Erap bandwagon journey rests, although some pundits are saying that the opposition has a decided edge due to the President's low ratings. But as in the 1998 presidential election, which was a race between two political neophytes, the underdog can be tagged in the population polls, what would fit the bill for his candidates in the administration's precincts in the countryside, the Lakas machinery and more logistics. It's also expected that people will pick freely from the various camps.

What should worry the Arroyo coalition is the rift among the forces supporting GMA, notably in the new two-week procession of Balintawak and Cubao. Every president has had this problem in the mid-term elections, but GMA's problem appears to be more serious. She should have attended to this long ago, but she chose to ignore it on account of her divide-and-rule strategy. The disunity among her allies, if unresolved, would have a telling effect on the election results.

Arroyo and Recto, in their fish pact of sojourning into their dense to-ing again with the GMA group, cited two main reasons. One is the opposition's steadfast refusal to defend the Constitution when it was under threat from military adventurers and to "recognize the constitutional succession to the presidency." It will be recalled that many who did not vacate like GMA when her term ended with the opposition mainly because it was unclear in its support for Estrada. Both de Guzmans in the room at last count. To many this echoed the 1 December 89 political chaos. Arroyo and Recto, who ran with Cojuangco in the Nacionalista Group, underscored this fact.

They also noted that the opposition has failed to offer a credible alternative for only true parties for last minute or impeachment. By contrast, the economy has become better under GMA. In view of the opposition's lack of program of government, the two remarks from "joining the administration coalition" and "there is no choice," are very promise "a clear mandate on anything else it may scrounge."

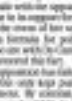
Fair enough. The two have captured a sentiment shared by many citizens, especially the business sector which is benefiting from the economic resurgence. Congress clearly going to give her her dollars she needs in the first round of budgets.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap does Iqbal-classic support, which is rare in Congress, for his confirmation rate record, with the legislators two opposing his efforts to raise productivity and income of farmers and fishermen, while delivering cheaper foodstuff to the people. He invited the Iqbal Tuesday to point out one (1) P50 project and what motivated the men in this fat's not private to pushing for very ambitious programs and projects, but for workable and cheaper ones. For instance, he noted that while palengkeng ante P50 to P60 a kilo in some Manila, in Mindoro it sells for only P11 a kilo because of the lack of road storage facilities which leaves fishermen to grab the first middleman's offer. His opposite number in Agrarian Reform, Horacio Morales, saying his agency has signed agreements with some Chinese groups to provide small mobile ice plants and municipal facilities to municipal fishery cooperatives and associations, apart from the rehabilitation of the giant Navotas Fish Port.

Philippine links are making headway abroad, thanks to more aggressive marketing. For instance, one million more passengers flew Philippine Airlines in 1996 than in the previous year, but the demand for transport abroad is three times this number, as China and Japan open their doors to it. In return, Philippine business airports are second only to Ecuador's. Among the interesting projects is the planned Subanon Free Port, managed by a Filipino named Ted Caparoso, which brings into Japan about P6 billion worth of luxurious yearly.

In the meantime, Chiles's Guangzhou Jiangnan Trade and Shipside Modern Development Co., Ltd., where 80 percent of fresh fruits are traded with an annual turnover of more than $1 billion, has given an invite to one from its San Francisco's Economic Development to join Japan's Mitsubishi Corp. in setting up a $200 million modern Agroamerica mall for the 1.2 billion Chinese market. Set progress from there.

Wherever the winds blow



AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THAT HE ELECTRONIST HONOREE JOKER ARroyo and Ralph Recto this nomination of to explain their joining the ministerial cabal of the administration was much about even the confused political situation we face today.

The two, one reportedly Joker, are not exactly known of brainstorming, and have been trying of late to strike independent. If not critical, prior vis-a-vis President Macapagal-Arroyo. (I cannot for the life of me picture Joker Arroyo and Ralph Recto about the economy or, much less anti-poverty strategies, back like Pompeio Pelaez and José Miguel Zaldo) who tried their best to unhead Ar Sison and Renee out of a job and a title.

And besides, we've had enough of the Cha-cha and wars, because believers in a ministerial system, someone voters they are fit to sit in the Senate which in previous months they had described as "rubber stamps" and "congressmen" lite. Then are they asking for our votes so that can preside over the former's surrender?

Indeed, what I heard some of the replies in the line-up—Pitoy and Zubiri, but also the singer, Mike Defensor, Vic Magsaysay, Tito Sotto and the (sadly) Chavit Singson—it struck me that the fleeting reminded them the computer gallery chair a hell-roll of statements. What is the administration's game plan? Why do they need to win seats when they're still in total possession of the executive and legislative machinery? Why do they need to win seats when they're still in total possession of the executive and legislative machinery? Why do they need to win seats when they're still in total possession of the executive and legislative machinery

Elections don't hold out promise of better future

ELECTIONS ARE ONE OF THE FEW remaining avenues by which the Filipino people can participate in the governance of our country. But a quick look at our past electoral exercises, and at the way the coming electoral exercise is shaping up right now, tells us that electoral in the Philippines do not hold much promise for the future. Those in power now seem to be getting away with the fraud they committed in the 2004 elections; and many, if not all of those implicated, have been rewarded with juicy positions in government. Add to that the continuing spate of extrajudicial killings, plus the realities of impunity it has spawned.

Here in Cotabato Visayas alone, as of January 2007, the number of extrajudicial killings recorded during the presidency of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has reached 106.

Last Jan. 13, during the launching of the Benedictines for Peace Movement in Luzon at Tagaytay, Archbishop Jose Palma of Cebu said that, "While screaming that life is selfish still now, I say it is not hopeless. There is still one of our problems."

Inspired by his words, we, Benedictine sisters in Eastern Visayas, decided to answer with other sisters working for a lasting peace that is based on justice.

So the upcoming 2007 elections, the Benedictines for Peace Movement will involve itself in the efforts to educate voters and will try to help victims of political repression.

We call on other peace and human rights advocates to join us in this effort. Through our collective effort, we can guarantee our people with credible and honest elections. And we will have leaders truly elected by them, and not just "winners" by vested manipulations of the ballots.

It is our prayer that we take, as our personal example, St. Benedict's exhortation for us to "seek peace and pursue justice." For indeed, there is still hope, till we need to believe and reach for its realization.

May wisely' live for those who will uphold the interest of our country' from for those who have in their hearts the aspirations of the heart of our brothers and sisters.

Shalom!

—SR. GERVA GEOPHE, OSB, Benedictines for Peace, Mahagnao Office, Lyceum del Verbo Divino Compound, Imelda St., Tacloban City

Media as counterweight to police abuse

SEN. JAMIL PAUL OOMPIO NOVELLO T. omar said that the government has the biggest arsenal; it has the military combining the army, the navy and the air force, all of those firepower here the town of the people, but the military can pose the greatest threat to individual liberty and freedom.

That's why according to our philosopher, the Bill of Rights is provided for in the Constitution to protect the people.

One media in Iloilo—print, radio and television—without regard for their safety and risking lives and limbs, covered and reported the Jan. 17 police raid on Ilo-Ilo provincial capital, to inform the whole country of the violations of human rights and due process by armed police operatives.

Let the enemies of democracy be reminded that the media of the Iloilo media is: "Give the people the light and they will find their way."

—EDGAR DAVID Cadoshal, Iloilo

New building for Comelec

BECAUSE OF THE POSTPONED BARANGAY and local elections, we will often see the old, dilapidated Commission on Elections building in Intramuros on TV and we cannot help but notice that compared to buildings which house other constitutional bodies, like the Civil Service Commission and the Commission on Audit, the Comelec building is "neglected" by the government.

In this connection, I urge the forthcoming 14th Congress to allocate money for the construction of a new Comelec building in the vast government land in Quezon City. This is the least we can do to a constitutional body like the Comelec.

—PAUL B. MORTEL, MISA Court, Mahanday, Marikina City 1805

LETTERS

Ombudsman can only recommend relief of officials

THE 1987 PHILIPPINE CONSTITUTION is clear and explicit: the Ombudsman may only recommend the removal or suspension of a public officer. Section 15, (1), (3) and (4) of Article XI, states thus the Ombudsman shall:

"(1) Investigate on its own, or on complaint by any person, any act or omission of any public official, employee, office or agency, when such act or omission appears to be illegal, unjust, improper, or inefficient xxx

"(3) Direct the officer concerned to take appropriate action against a public official or employee at fault, and recommend his removal, suspension, demotion, fine, censure, or prosecution, and ensure compliance thereof;"

If the act or omission appears to be illegal, unjust, improper, or inefficient, in ordering disbursement or use of public funds or property, the Ombudsman's duty is to direct the Commission on Audit to take appropriate action. Section 3 (f) thereof, says the Ombudsman shall:

"(4) Direct the officer concerned, in any appropriate case, and subject to such limitations as may be provided by law, to furnish it with copies of documents relating to contracts or transactions entered into by his office involving the disbursement or use of public funds or properties, and report any irregularity to the Commission on Audit for appropriate action."

A close scrutiny of the provision of the 1987 Philippine Constitution would tell us that there must be a final decision before a removal or any penalty can be effected.

—NERISSA R. NEREDA, 6/F Integrated Professional Corporate Center, 114 Quezon Ave., Quezon City

Why private citizens yield to gov't corruption

IT IS NOT ENTIRELY THE FAULT OF THE government that it is corrupt. The citizens who "pay" or give in to solicitations are also to blame for the corruption in government.

I tend to readily mock and judge those who "give in," believing that they have no principles or that they simply want an easy way out. But now I know better—after an experience in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

It is not really because the citizens readily pay. Some citizens don't pay. Some just want to do what is right. But, obviously, that's the foolish course of action.

You passively follow the process until you cannot help but notice an inconsistency due to some employees' inefficiency. (I, You start asking questions and you get glaring excuses and lies....how can you fight that? They slowly torture you with delays, until it reaches a point that you start believing in the "impossibility" of your papers getting processed.

The employees' most effective weapons are time and....the longer it takes you to finish your business—your diminishing resources. And let's not forget their antiquities...as if they are superior to private citizens, as if every citizen they serve is unworthy of their time and favor. So, when following up your papers, don't forget to say "Thank you" and "Please" with a trembling voice....that is, if you don't want your paper "buried," according to our employee. And never report any act of solicitation, no one will lift a finger in response. Instead, you will be humiliated and burdened with the task of proving it—as if anyone asking for money would be so stupid to do it in a very obvious manner.

Even if officialdom knew that your accusation is true, they'd just laugh it off. They'd be afraid to side with you or another environ gainst her they've decided for being "self-righteous." An outsider's complaint is not worth the risk of losing the friendship of every one else in the whole department.

You think that your complaint will speed up the processing of your papers? On the contrary. The person you reported will take it personally, and it will be you who will be "punished." You'll suffer more delays and more "obstacles" until you feel you're sounding all alone: supervised, frustrated, exhausted and helpless; until you hear a familiar refrain you've heard a long, long time ago: "Gempoy talaga, kung gusto mong kumukad ang mga papeles mo, dapats sa mich space under the table."

—LIBERTY L. CUBAGHS, lenasusa@yahoo.com

A very expensive road-repair estimate

THIS IS A REACTION TO A NEWS ITEM about the bombed lakes in Eastern Samar. (Inquirer, 1/20/07) The report quoted an official of the Department of Public Works and Highways as saying that it takes P20 million to repair a one-kilometer stretch of the asphalted national road in that province. I recall a 327 meter long barangay road project in Balinggig, Eastern Samar in 2005. It was so while as the national road and was constructed eight inches thick. Asteriously implemented by the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the municipal government of Balinggig and the members of the community under the KALAHI CIDSS Project, a cost only P1 million. That would mean the cost of paving a road is roughly P3 million per kilometer.

—RENE ANTO-ARIA, ariagmm@yahoo.com.ph 823 139 Ramon Efrain Magsaysay, Tacloban City

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to fax. 897-2793, 897-2794, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph

The names of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Why can't I come home?

– Rizal again

Dare to win.
Be an Inquirer.
INQUIRER

Across the NATION

PASEGURUHAN NG MGA NAGLILINGKOD SA PAMAHALAAN (GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM)
Financial Center, Pasay City, Metro Manila 1300

GSIS CENTRAL OFFICE ENROLLMENT SCHEDULE GUIDE

GSIS Members Working in Agencies Located at	Enrollment Center / Address	Enrollment Period
Pasay City	GSIS Head Office, Pasay City	February 15 – April 10
Makati City	GSIS Head Office, Pasay City	February 15 – April 10
Selected agencies in Manila: 1. Department of Environment & Natural Resources Region-IV, Roxas Blvd. 2. Department of Finance 3. Environmental Management Bureau 4. Philippine Navy Flag Officer in Command—Cuartian 5. Home Development Mutual Fund, Malate Branch 6. Landbank of the Philippines Head Office, Malate 7. Philippine Conventions & Visitors Corporation, Malate 8. Philippine Sports Commission	GSIS Head Office, Pasay City	February 15 – April 10
City of Manila	Metropolitan Theatre, Liwasang Bonifacio	February 15 – April 10
Quezon City	GSIS Quezon City Field Office, Elliptical Road	February 15 – April 10
Navotas	Navotas Municipal Hall	February 15 – 23
Malabon City	Navotas Municipal Hall	February 15 – 23
Valenzuela City	Valenzuela City Hall	February 26 – March 5
Caloocan City	Caloocan City Hall	March 6 – 26
Pasig City	Pasig City Hall	February 15 – April 3
San Juan	San Juan Municipal Hall	February 15 – 20
Mandaluyong City	Mandaluyong City Hall	February 22 – March 28
Taguig City	Taguig City Hall	February 15 – April 12
Pateros	Taguig City Hall	February 15 – April 12
Muntinlupa City	Muntinlupa City Hall	February 15 – March 9
Las Piñas City	Las Piñas City Hall	March 12 – 27
Parañaque City	Parañaque City Hall	February 15 – March 28
Cavite Province	Provincial Capitol, Trece Martires City	February 15 – April 10
Rizal Province	Ynares Center, Antipolo City	February 15 – April 10
Marikina City	Ynares Center, Antipolo City	February 15 – April 10
Bulacan Province	DepEd Training Center, Capitol Compound, Malolos City	February 15 – April 10

Lim may run vs De Venecia in Pangasinan

DAGUPAN CITY—There is no stopping Mayor Benjamin Lim now from running against Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. in the congressional race in Pangasinan's fourth district in May.

LIM

DE VENECIA

Asked if formally proclaiming his candidacy, Lim said he sees becoming "more and more" encouraged by the support he was getting from people from the district.

The district is composed of Dagupan City and the towns of Mangaldan, San Fabian, San Jacinto and Binmaley.

"It has been getting more and more encouraging," Lim told the Inquirer.

"If before, all I heard was 'Why not?' whenever I asked them what they thought if I run for congressman, now they tell me that they will support me."

He said that in several towns of the district, campaign groups had already been formed, with him as their congressional candidate.

"The people in the district really want change. They are tired of the present situation. They are tired of promises; they want action; they want economic improvement," he said.

He added: "So, it is not because we have had the opportunity to (make the district) become more progressive, with De Venecia being the Speaker for 12 years."

"And yet we don't see the same kind of progress that we see in Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Bulacan, Cebu and in many parts of the country. They don't even have a Speaker in their area and yet they are all progressive."

Lim said he still had to announce his candidacy "much earlier" than the deadline for the filing of candidacy for local elective positions on March 29.

If he finally decides to run for congressman, he said he would have no choice but to join the opposition.

Although he has not been expelled yet from the administration Lakas-CMD, he said he felt his expulsion was coming.

"I hope that they will also consider making the fourth district a free zone. That would be a very worthwhile (electoral) exercise," he said. Gabriel Cardenas, Inquirer Northern Luzon

PRESIDENTIAL Adviser for Western Visayas Rafael Cocoloan visits Barangay Tanke in December after the oil-spilled Honda Valencia in August. Cocoloan made an easier impression to assess the rehabilitation program of Guimaras Island. The process of rehabilitation is slow, although some residents who rely heavily on fishing for their livelihood, have started receiving payments. AFP/CEZ

Victims of Petron oil spill receive payments

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE INTERNATIONAL OIL Pollution Compensation (IOPC) Fund has paid a total of P1.63 million to victims of the Solar 1 oil spill in Guimaras.

IOPC Deputy Director Jon Nichols said in an e-mail that the agency had approved and paid for the claims of 713 individuals from the towns of Jordan, Alimaog, Nueva Valencia, Buenavista and Isabel in Leyte.

At least 300 claimants did not come forward to receive their compensation, Nichols said.

The IOPC will soon process the claims of 3,000 people engaged in fishing from the towns of Oton, Concepcion and Tubigon Bohol, as well as 75 claims of unpaid farmers and 90 fishpond operators from Guimaras.

Nichols said the agency would settle the claims of the second batch of victims from Guimaras after they have paid the claimants from Bohol.

The oil spill has brought sufferings to 5,437 families, or 26,740 persons, after the tanker sank in stormy seas off Guimaras on Aug. 11 and dumped more than 2.2 million liters of bunker fuel oil it was transporting for Petron Corp. from Bataan to Cambodia.

The Coast Guard said it believed that around 300,000 liters spilled into the sea, contaminating coastal areas with oil sludge.

At least 13,000 people, mostly engaged in fishing, have filed claims for damages from the spill-contaminated fishing grounds and devastated the island's rich marine life and tourism sites.

The IOPC, a London-based intergovernmental agency that indemnifies losses resulting from oil spills, has paid the claimants engaged in fishing amounts ranging from P5,000 to P32,000.

It has also released initial payments to at least 50 operators of resorts and other tourism sites from P1,000 to P250,000.

Church groups, led by Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines president and San Jose Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, along with environmental groups and non-government organizations, have called for higher compensation for the victims, claiming that the amount being paid by the IOPC was not enough to cover their losses.

But the IOPC officials have said that they came up with the amount of compensation based on the IOPC field surveys and the type of fishing the claimants were engaged in.

Nichols said that the removal of the remaining oil from the wreck was expected to start March 14. He said the duration of the operation would depend on how much oil remains onboard but they expect the operation to take 10 to 20 days.

Insurers of the stricken tanker and the IOPC have announced the salvage firm Smit-Tak to remove the oil from the wreck at a depth of 600 meters from the sea floor.

The operation is estimated to cost between $8 million and $12 million, depending on the volume of oil left.

Several groups and leaders of the province had asked residents to reject a worker visa they were illegally being made to sign upon acceptance of the payment. The worker allegedly would prevent the victim from filing cases in court in the future.

METRO
Citizen's Call
Our City of Affections and Disaffections is made up of stories.
Your stories. Tell us all about it.
- Did a signage make your day?
- Garbage dumped on your street unmake your day?
- Street diggings forever on the street where you live?
- Are you up in arms against the demolition of an ancestral house?
- Awed by a little-known barangay project with a big positive impact in your community?
- Got stuck in politics?
- Fed up with cussing and fouling neighbors?
- Is there an everyday role model in your neighborhood?
- Delightful/dreadful finds on your way to work?
Tell, text us about it. With photos, if you will. Share the good news where you are—and the bad. Being involved in the only way to make Metro Manila a safer, saner, healthier and an exciting place to live in.
JUST TEXT SMS: mail nanaupfrontin <message>
MMS: <insert photo> mail nanaupfrontin <caption/message>
0918-8985566
P.S. Please don't send tips on criminal activities and issues. Tell the police.
INQUIRER

Non-working holiday today!!

Parañaque marks its 9th Year as a City

by Nelson A. Lucambre & Eduard P. Blasco

Mdalacañang has declared February 11 a non-working holiday in Parañaque City to allow the city residents to fully celebrate the 9th Anniversary of its conversion from a municipality to a highly urbanized city.

Mayor Florencio "Ted" Bernabe will lead local city officials and employees, and multi-sectoral groups, in marking the anniversary with various activities geared to a week-long revelry and also the day itself.

Scheduled on February 7 is a thanksgiving mass for the birthday of Mayor Bernabe, now various city medical services under the auspices of the Parañaque City Health Office at the City Hall. Among the free services are HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus), cholesterol determination, bone scanning, acupuncture, massage, and dental consultation.

Barangay Chairmen and Councilmen of Barangay Sun-Valley in Parañaque City during the Sun-Valley Fiesta Celebration

Starting tomorrow, February 10, Mayor Bernabe will lead the launching at the Parañaque City National High School on Dr. Arcadio Santos Ave. (formerly Sucat Road) of the so-called ARISE: Character Development Seminar-Workshop for Public Elementary Schools with the theme: "Ang Pagbabago Nagsisimula Sa Akin" (Change Starts With Me). Organized by the Parañaque City Schools District Office, the seminar-workshop is expected to benefit around 4,000 teachers and pupils from 20 public elementary schools in the city.

Also on February 10 is the culmination of the Parañaque City Fiesta Celebration with the Search for Mutya ng Parañaque 2006 at the Parañaque City Sports Complex in Barangay Don Bosco.

Mayor Florencio "Ted" Bernabe and Vice-Mayor Jun Vivas outside Mayor's Conference

For adventurers into an unfortunate incidence of the city, the Parañaque Lingkod Kapulisan Resource Management Office (PLKRMO) has organized a month-long Trek Fun in the City Hall grounds (Circa to 60 laps and includes trivia/history bits) speaking to community Parañaque which have noteworthy supported previous city gift fairs set again starting.

Also, the Parañaque City Government and the communities included a free concert sponsored by the Parañaque Youth and Sports Office at the Sucat Park along Sucat Aguado Ave. last February 9 featuring some of today's hottest bands and celebrities such as the Sex Bomb Dancers and Gloc-9 among others.

The Cultural and Tourism Office has also lined up a Book Festival in cooperation with the Book Club of the Philippines on February 13. Highlights of the program was a guided bird watching tour at an isolated mini-nature, the bird sanctuary in Barangay Don Bosco. Majority of the bird watchers are expected to be private students from various public and private schools in Parañaque, among them students and pupils of St. Paul College and St. Andrew School in Parañaque. The guided tours are limited to only 50 persons at one time from the 8am to 4pm schedule.

Another upcoming cultural/musical fare is the staging of **Pasagan Bridals**, a presentation of Bridal Fair by San Dionisio on February 16, 7:00 p.m. at the City Hall, to be celebrated on the anniversary special activities for public.

Being a holiday today in the city, there are but a few activities that have taken or currently taking place now. Except for one or two private get-together that the host event and his/her family, elected friends and associates to mark the day by reflecting and thanking their fellow men for the many positive changes and improvements that have been introduced or initiated by the present administration of Mayor Florencio Bernabe himself for their benefit, and principal and basis for the city in the past year or so.

The month-long program that Mayor Bernabe and his city administration have executed from credible and investigative around getting bolder lines and effective in the past year or so, good enough for the city has achieved in the comparatively short space of time of two and a half years.

The month-long activity to culminate the month's achievements and activities of the city government is the search for Mutya ng Parañaque City, and pageantry for entertainment, but more importantly, propelled the people to express their appreciation of municipal government.

Councilors and Officials of Parañaque with Vice-Mayor Jun Vivas

Special Citation In Fiscal Management

The coveted Special Citation in Fiscal Management was given by the Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants during its Philippine Business Conference cum Manila Boat on October 20, 2006.

The award was in recognition of Mayor Bernabe's audacious utilization of scarce resources and established financial management style. He introduced an austere budgeting system and established a reliable accounting unit of a fully accredited, fully computerized Treasurer's and Assessor's Offices, part of the rehabilitation and expansion of City Hall. Bernabe's unique budgeting system also included the setting up of a Business Center at the City Hall where taxpayers can conduct their business transactions in person or by fax without the necessity to travel while waiting for their transfers to be finished on an electronic board.

This new system has resulted in cutting down processing and paying times to only a few minutes. As a matter of fact, the Business Permit and Licenses Office (BPLO), for the first time in years, has reported a zero backlog in the issuance of business permits.

SANITARY LANDFILL: Equipped to comfortably sit a fully accomodated, fast compaction treatment, foreign, odor sealing are qualities to be considered by Parañaque

As a result of the new systems and procedures introduced by Mayor Bernabe, the city government has, for the past two years, recorded unprecedented increases in tax collection and gradually reduced the huge debt burden that the previous city administration had left behind for the new city government to deal with.

Mayor Bernabe took over as city mayor in July 2004 following his win in the May 10, 2004 local and national elections. In inherited from the previous administration outstanding bank loans and payables to contractors, suppliers and government agencies in the total of close to P3 billion. Today, this liability is down to about P200 million, the result of the increased tax collection system he instituted in early 2005.

In the meantime, new projects, long overdue, who previously refused to pay or reluctantly paid their taxes came to pay their correct taxes on time after seeing that the new system coupled with judicious and economical spending began yielding positive and visible results. With an expanded tax base and higher collection efficiency, the city government is now able to implement an ambitious infrastructure development program beginning in the third quarter of year 2006. The initial projects include the construction of four-storey city hall annex, a new multi-purpose gymnasium in Barangay Moonwalk and four public schools, or two more expansion or rehabilitation to augment the perennial problem of classroom shortages and help ease classroom congestion in other schools in neighboring areas.

Vice-Mayor Jun Vivas, Mayor Florencio P. Bernabe and Rudy Cruz, City Mayor San Juan City during the Mayor's Conference at the Parañaque City Hall. Mayor Bernabe is also a close friend of Mayor Estrada and a political ally of the latter in the city.

Outstanding City Mayor of the Philippines

A month before your 30th came to a close Mayor Bernabe bagged what in the opinion of many is perhaps one of the most difficult awards to win due to its stringent criteria and comprehensive selection process – the coveted Outstanding City Mayor of the Philippines. Majority of the city officials of the country try to be chosen this most prestigious recognition – personnel performance, city mayors, and municipal mayors – extends to a most coveted and prestigious award.

The Jaycees International Senate, a non-government organization, the local award of excellence to local government administrators and personalities. It also validates the total system and the leadership capability and qualities through comprehensive interviews with the local executive administrative officers, observation and verification of what is claimed to be the results accomplishments.

This is done through a collaborative effort of the office of Sen. Aquilino Q. Pimentel Jr. with the University of the Philippines, Center for Local and Regional Governance, Asian Institute of Management, Local Government Academy, Local Government Academy, Department of Interior and Local Government, La Salle Institute of Governance, De La Salle University and the Ateneo Graduate School of Government, Development Academy of the Philippines.

In accepting the award, Mayor Bernabe said that the P2 trustworthy quality which the awards committee described as moral, participative, functionary and service-oriented.

In all the Local Government Leadership Awards gave the recognition to the outstanding local government executives, their programs as well as outstanding the innovative programs and projects that the administrators has accomplished and administrative the benefit and proper good of the people of Parañaque.

PARAÑAQUE CITY HALL: The Parañaque City Hall after undergoing a massive and much needed rehabilitation

Citation for City with Great Potential

A special citation given to Parañaque City by the Alliance of Healthy Cities, a worldwide project of the World Health Organization (WHO), during the awarding ceremonies held in Singapore in October last year.

The award cited the Parañaque city government for setting the basic foundations, introducing and implementing a wide range of health-related programs for a wide range of services that can access various departments and offices in the Parañaque City Hall.

To qualify, the Alliance for Healthy Cities awards committee took cognizance of the city government's ongoing efforts to safeguard and improve its constituents' well-being through significant health care and medical, dental and optical services, and environmental sanitation.

On the delivery of basic services, education, health care, livelihood and employment, infrastructure development, peace and order, and cleanliness and beautification are all key areas that the city government has given priority. As such, the effort of Mayor Bernabe to improve the logistical services

My warmest felicitations to all my fellow Parañaqueños on the occasion of the Ninth (9th) Anniversary of our cityhood.

Today, we are witnessing many great changes in our midst, changes that have given us only cause for celebration. But there also great task, not of us a stronger sense of affinity with our city which we are endeavoring to transform into a model modern city, but still to globally competitive in many respects in line with our vision.

Indeed, there is much to be proud of with much improvement has been achieved in infrastructure, our educational system, particularly our public school system, in economically taking in our resources to meet the personnel requirement to sustain [illegible]. We have created an [illegible] of gainful employment to our residents. Unemployment rate is [illegible] and prospects are in the case and about to start the planning and preparation stages. The full city of Manila and surrounding cities [illegible] and [illegible] are [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible] and

Quezon exec says DILG behind 'jueteng' return

TREE OF KNOWLEDGE
The studies of a tree in LUAR town in Jolo provide an alternative to a classroom for these students of the Luuk National High School who are in preparation for their classes.

LUCENA CITY—A SENIOR provincial board member has pointed to an unidentified official of the Department of the Interior and Local Government as the man behind the resurrection of the illegal numbers game "jueteng" in Quezon province.

"Jueteng in any province will not thrive without the go-signal from the DILG," said Board Member Eladio Pesumbo Jr.

"It is the one issuing the final order to the police—from Camp Crame to the provincial police director down to the town police chief."

"Police officials have no other recourse but to obey the order. We can't blame them because it is an order from the higher ups," he added.

Earlier, a town mayor disclosed that a group of gambling bankers, allegedly close to the provincial and unidentified Cabinet official, had been luring local government executives in the province to call for a stop to the governor-run small town lottery to pave the way for the immediate return of jueteng.

The move meant an exchange for payola in time for the election campaign season, he said.

Board Member Isabel Ubana II said he would call on Interior Sec. Victorio Carpio Jr., Quezon police chief, to appear before the Sangguniang Panlalawigan and explain why jueteng has resumed in the province.

Carpio denied the allegation that he was promoting illegal gambling. He said he was ready to appear before the board anytime.

"I have nothing to hide and have nothing to fear," he said.

Representatives Danilo Suarez (3rd District) and Precious Alexis (2nd District) called on Carpio to step down on all suspected jueteng, drug and arms personalities involved, including their protectors in the government.

According to Suarez, "rampant jueteng operations have again resurfaced in the towns of San Narciso, San Andres, Mulanay and Buenavista in the Bondoc Peninsula area.

He confirmed the information earlier provided by Quezon Bishop Emilio Marquez that a certain Tony Abella and one Tony Ong were behind the jueteng revival in the province.

"According to my information, Abella is a nephew of a retired police general. And's why she's too bold in her operations," Suarez said over the phone.

Carapan said he would immediately form a special unit to investigate the report.

Where barons of jueteng exemption was opposed by the business last month, Ubana sponsored a resolution opposing the return of the unlawful betting.

"But with those reports coming no less than from Bishop Marquez that jueteng resurgence is apparent, it means that our call is being ignored. The police have a lot of explaining to do," the board said.

Bishop Marquez, Diocese of Lucena head, assailed the revival of jueteng and urged voters to appoint local government officials untainted by it.

Marquez said he would soon issue a pastoral letter to remind voters to remain vigilant against politicians who would use campaign funds from illegal activities, particularly jueteng and drugs. Emilio Abellari Jr., inquirer foothers (Lucena

Deal cut in Malacañang to pave way for unopposed Leyte poll bids

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—A MEMBER OF former first lady Imelda Marcos, who is seeking a congressional seat in Leyte's first district, would likely run unopposed.

Reinhard Martin Romualdez, son of former Leyte Gov. Benjamin "Kokoy" Romualdez, and Vicedont Municipal Attorney concurred incumbent Rep. Remedios Ortilla not to seek reelection.

"I feel convinced now that she will be supported by the President not to run. This will not only benefit me personally but (also) our people," Romualdez said in an interview.

Romualdez and Ortilla met with President Arroyo in Malacañang on Saturday morning to find a "win-win solution" to serve a rival faction between the two most dominant political families in Leyte.

"The meeting was somewhat tension filled but everything went smoothly. I know it was not easy for her to decide not to seek reelection. And I thank her for accepting the backing of the President. She is, after all, concerned about the benefit of our people," Romualdez said.

Aside from Ortilla and Romualdez, Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats regional chair Rep. Maximino Libanan and presidential political adviser Gabriel Claudio, who is also the Cabinet officer for Regional Development in Eastern Visayas, attended the meeting.

Ortilla, who belongs to the Lakas-CMD but is an ally of the President, said she respected the decision of the President and would not mind returning to the Cagayan. Like Romualdez, she would most likely run unopposed.

According to Ortilla, she agreed to run for governor since this would enable her to serve not only the first congressional district but also the entire province, which is composed of 41 towns and the cities of Ormoc and Tacloban.

She had built her gubernatorial post for nine straight years. Her son Jericho Carlos succeeded her as governor.

The first congressional district is composed of the towns of Isabel, Kananga, Matalom, Sta. Fe, San Miguel, Tabon, Tanauan and Tacloban.

Romualdez, 44, who is seeking a public office for the first time, will run under the banner of the President's own political party, Lakas-Kampi-Kabalikang Pilipino.

The incumbent governor, Jericho Carlos, who is Ortilla's son, is running for senator under the Lakas-Kampi-Kabalikang Pilipino.

Buri may yet save Ifugao rice terraces from worms

BAGUIO CITY—The tiny palm that grows abundantly in wasteland areas and in coastal plains may yet save Ifugao's rice terraces from deterioration caused by plant earthworms.

A recent study conducted by the mosquito research and development section (DRDS) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in the Cordillera found that fruit extracts were effective organic nematicides (substances that kill worms).

Inside worms, causing stagnation, giant earthworms, called locally as "uyang," have threatened to collapse the rice terraces since they ripened through the soil and ripping dikes that cause soil erosion and water to leak from the rice paddies.

Ifugao farmers said the farmlands has also contributed to the decrease in soil fertility and low yield of the terraces.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) has listed the Ifugao terraces as one of the world's endangered heritage sites.

"The research is considered a breakthrough in the farmers and the DENR had been searching for effective measures against the earthworms," Ramon Debuklis, CENRO Cordillera director, said.

The DRDS research team conducted the study from October to December last year and found that fruit extracts were able to kill plant-parasitic worms.

The teams conducted laboratory and field trials that involved 22 kilograms of fruit fruits which were divided in groups and soaked in water in varying time periods before extraction. The extracts were strained and prepared in different dosage concentrations.

The team, composed of Josephine Marmes, Marylou Andrada, Imelda Tigday and George Tomas, found that in both trials, earthworms in mortality was high.

THE MIRACULOUS PALM
Buri cuts through the Ifugao rice terraces.

It observed that the higher the dosage of buri fruit extracts, the more worms became the effect on the earthworms.

Earthworms, removed in extracts with higher concentrations died faster while those treated in lower dosages took a longer time to die, the team said.

The research also found that there are more worms where the fruits were fermented or soaked for at least two days or more before extraction.

The researchers said the earthworms weighed less when immersed in the extract, indicating paralysis and death.

The DRDS research official Jaime Lasa's University have conducted a phytochemical analysis of the buri extracts and found that they had high levels of tannin and steroids that are acidic, bitter and have an unpleasant taste.

The analysis showed that the green soapy substances that came out during the extraction contained compounds with antifungal and antifungal properties.

Martinez, the study team leader, said Morris Bain, the DENR's community environment and natural resources officer (CENRO) in Ifugao, first raised the idea of studying the potentials of the buri palm against earthworms.

She said Bain and Sr. Lydia Tibus, a veterinarian, observed that earthworms came out of the ground where buri fruits were decomposing the Green Compound.

The observation led students of the Ifugao Senior High School in Lamut town to conduct their own experiment. They found that the earthworms killed the earthworms in less than five minutes.

Bain relayed the results to Peñalosi and Ilgido Corrales, the DENR regional technical director for research, who asked the DRDS to conduct a full study.

Dalmar Cawilan, Inquirer Northern Luzon

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NEWS

Blackout on Nigeria hostages

By Cynthia D. Balana and TJ Burgonio

THE GOVERNMENT TECHNICALLY imposed a news blackout on the status of the 26 Filipino kidnap victims in Nigeria, for their protection and to prevent the collapse of negotiations for their release.

Vice President Noli de Castro, presidential adviser on overseas Filipino workers, asked the media to cooperate in this "life-or-death situation."

"The kidnappers were strongly whenever they said that ransom is being discussed," he told the business in an interview.

De Castro declined to say whether the payment of ransom was being considered as an option to secure the release of the 26 Filipinos—24 seafarers, an engineer and a woman.

According to Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, Philippine Ambassador to Nigeria Mocampo B. Crespo had assured him that the Nigerian government was doing everything to end the hostage situation.

Romulo admitted though that there was no word on whether Jolibeth C. Ponsoran, the Filipino hostage matched to an Iranian, was still alive.

Ponsoran's sister, Jane Grapole, told the media yesterday that the kidnappers had threatened members of her sister's family who were still in Nigeria.

Gabriela and Migrante International urged the government to take "direct and immediate action" and press the Nigerian government to put an end to the "hostage crisis."

Ponsoran, 37, of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, became the 26th Filipino to be kidnapped by unidentified men in Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta after a Filipino engineer was snatched on Feb. 6, and the 24 crewmen on Jan. 30.

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"We're worried sick about the conditions of the two kids and my three cousins there (Nigeria). We appeal to the government to bring them home," a teary-eyed Grapole told reporters at the Diliman office in Quezon City.

She said the kidnappers had called Ponsoran's husband, Manuechehr, and threatened their family last Saturday.

Grapole said the kidnappers used her sister's mobile phone.

Ponsoran has a daughter, Hannah, 14, and a son, Abdiel, 11, with Manuechehr.

Grapole first aired her appeal when she and Occidental Mindoro Gov. Josephine Ramirez Sato met with Foreign Undersecretary Esteban Conejos last Friday.

"Conejos assured us he would exhaust all means and would speak with my brother-in-law. If they're allowed to come home, he doesn't see any problem with this," she said in the joint briefing with Gabriela and Migrante officials.

"Even my brother-in-law feels they're not safe there in Nigeria. They're afraid they might become the next victims after CIDG showed their pictures, including those of the children, on TV," she added.

Ponsoran was seized by unidentified men at midday on Feb. 7 near a bank on Hadeson Road in Port Harcourt, Nigeria's capital. She managed to call her husband before her phone was taken by the kidnappers.

Reacting to the kidnappings, Presidential Management Secretary said: "I've told Labor Secretary Arturo Brion that his trouble spots, we should allow voluntary repatriation. We have a program of voluntary repatriation, to those who want to come home (through the facilities of the government." With Abs Ruel Lim Ubac

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DAMI SMART TAYO

Aplus METRO
Editor Bror G. Dipasupil

Spat about toilet habit leads to tragic end

Man irked by neighbor dies in shootout with Las Piñas policemen

By Julie M. Aurelio

WHAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A LAZY Sunday afternoon in a neighborhood in Las Piñas City turned into a dangerous three hours when an altercation broke out between two residents.

The incident started when Bobi Bulatao, 34, relieved himself in front of his neighbor's house in Gloria Compound, Barangay Pilar and was shot by the latter's son.

Bobi was rushed to the Las Piñas Medical Center after he was hit in the left arm.

The owner of the house, Elmer Villa Hermosa, 45, later fired at policemen who responded and asked him to surrender. They fired back, hitting him several times. He died while being treated at a hospital.

According to witnesses, Bulatao and another neighbor stopped in front of Villa Hermosa's house at around 4:30 p.m. Sunday.

Bulatao proceeded to relieve himself but as he did so, the suspect saw him from the second floor of his house.

An argument broke out between the two. It ended when Villa Hermosa shot the victim, hitting him in the arm. Neighbors rushed Bulatao to the Las Piñas Medical Center where he remains under observation.

Neighbors who heard the gunshots immediately called the police.

A Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team responded but when they asked the suspect to surrender, he refused and barricaded himself inside his house.

The SWAT team then approached the house but were forced to take cover when Villa Hermosa suddenly fired at them, forcing them to retreat.

Villa Hermosa was hit on the chest, and investigator SPO4 George Gabriel told the INQUIRER, He was hit by the others, hence in the stomach and rear to the front.

He later died at 7:17 p.m. while undergoing treatment at the Bishop Medical Center.

6 suspects in slay of 2 cops named

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

POLICE HAVE IDENTIFIED SIX SUSPECTS IN the ambush of two policemen assigned to secret intelligence operations in a remote area in Nueva Ecija on Sunday afternoon.

The suspects, however, remain at large.

"We are looking follow-up operations to arrest the suspects. But at least we know who they are now," Rizal provincial chief, Senior Supt. Freddie Panao, told the Inquirer.

In an official report, the provincial police named the suspects as Bonnie Tagnak, Jack Tumandang, Dante Bernal, a certain Richie, a certain Rikki and a certain Roberto.

PO3 Romeo Abiquibon and PO2 Ulbert Gloria of the Regional Mobile Group were on patrol in Sitio Tapayan, Lupang Arenda at 2:40 p.m. Sunday when four men on board motorcycles fired upon them.

The two policemen were killed instantly.

The ambush happened only 10 days after teams from the Philippine National Police Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, the Maritime Group and the Philippine Marines raided a house in Lupang Arenda in search of suspected bomb experts working for another group.

A man was killed while three others, including a suspected member of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, were arrested during the police operation.

Another stude in QC poison case arraigned

By DJ Yap

AFTER A SERIES OF DELAYS, THE SECOND accused in the controversial poisoning incident at the Philippine Science High School (PSHS) was arraigned yesterday on charges of homicide and murder in a Quezon City court.

"I am not guilty," the respondent, a minor and former PSHS student, told Judge Ma. Lourdes Garcia of Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 105, after the charges were read to him.

"He was very respectful. I must say," private prosecutor Eugenio Villareal recalled, moments after the hearing.

Along with another classmate, the respondent stands accused of spiking a vial of mercuric chloride into a fellow student's water jug, causing a classmate who drank from it on an 11th-century lateral injuries.

In their respective counter-affidavits, the two students, who were 16 at the time of the incident, denied the charges, but they gave conflicting statements as to who was the culprit.

The respondent's lawyer, Jose Vincent Jurado, sought another postponement of the arraignment by filing a motion to delay the proceedings, pending the resolution of their motion for reconsideration to the prosecutor's office.

But Garcia said the motion had already been denied and ordered the immediate arraignment of the accused, Villareal said.

Employee dies in Malate car repair shop fire

PET LOVERS AMD PETS WELCOME
A dog gets ready to greet customers at Kainan nila Doktora & Pet Restoran, a restaurant which caters to both humans and their animal companions. The restaurant at Visayas Avenue, Quezon City is beside a veterinary clinic. KIMM LLANES

By Margaux C. Deriz

A MAN WAS KILLED WHILE TWO other people were injured when a fire broke out in an automobile repair shop in Manila yesterday morning.

The fatality was identified as Ahmad Berroso, 49, an employee of the garage and repair shop owned by the Jo Guzman family located at 2408 Arellano Street in Malate, Manila.

SFO2 Wilson Tiano of the Manila Fire Department said garage owner Arlene de Guzman, 28, suffered second-degree burns on her left arm and right hand while mechanic Guillermo Basilog burned his back.

Initial investigation conducted by the arson investigator showed that Basilog was having the gas line tank of his taxi cab repaired for leaks when the fire began at 8:20 a.m. "An electronic spark may have come into contact with gasoline fumes and ignited the fire," Tiano said in an interview.

Tiano said that Berroso, who was inspecting the taxi cab when the fire began, ran to the back of the garage where he suffocated to death. Basilog, on the other hand, was able to run outside, and suffered only minor injuries.

The fire, which quickly reached the fifth alarm before it was put out at 8:57 a.m., razed the second and third floors of the shop which served as the owners' house.

Tiano added that three taxi cabs inside the garage at the time the fire broke out were also damaged.

Motorcycle mishap claims lives of couple

By Julia M. Aurelio

A MAN AND HIS WIFE WERE killed after their motorcycle slammed into a truck on Roxas Boulevard on Saturday morning.

Mark Arthur and Schiba de Silva died while undergoing treatment at the San Juan de Dios Hospital in Pasay City. The couple were residents of Pulang Lupa in Las Piñas City.

Police said that at around 2:20 a.m. Saturday, a Mitsubishi Fuso Canter truck being driven by Larry Manzanares suddenly stopped on the southbound lane of Roxas Boulevard in Barangay 76zobo, Pandacan City.

The De Silvas, who were behind the truck in a motorcycle, were unable to stop and crashed into the truck.

Attempts to arrive in police custody. Charges of double homicide and damage to property will be filed against him.

Man on Metro's most wanted list caught

By Nancy C. Carvajal

THE CALOOCAN CITY POLICE yesterday announced the arrest of the second most wanted man in Metro Manila.

Caloocan chief of police, Supt. Pilfredo Maravilla, said a cash reward of P250,000 was being offered for the capture of Larry Perez San Felipe, also known as Jerry Lumanog, a resident of Bagong Silang, Caloocan City.

San Felipe was number two in the Metro Manila police's Order of Battle, he added.

Maravilla said the wanted man was arrested in the vicinity of the Super Ferry terminal at Pier 15, Port Area, Manila last Saturday.

The operation was conducted by local police operatives and members of the Police Anti-Crime Emergency Response after weeks of surveillance.

"He was about to board a boat, apparently to hide in the countryside, when he was apprehended," Maravilla said.

A source also said that they discovered the identity of the suspect when they did a background check.

According to Maravilla, San Felipe is wanted for several cases, including kidnapping, robbery in band with homicide and illegal possession of firearms.

"The suspect is also facing a rape and a murder in a grenade-throwing incident during a rodeo last year that killed three people and wounded 21 others," the source added.

San Felipe was reportedly egged by some witnesses and victims who identified him as one of the three men seen at the scene of Celerino Salazar, father of Chairs star Mavenette.

The three walked up to the house where the rodeo was being hosted, threw a grenade and then walked away.

Charito is one of the witnesses in the case of Ralph Rodeo, a camera man of television network RPN-9, who was stabbed and then dead in July 2000.

He was supposed to go to his in-laws's wake on the night the grenade-throwing incident occurred but the police stopped him.

San Felipe is detained at the Sector headquarters in Camp Crame.

METROBRIEFS

Missing cash

WHERE were no signs of burglary nor of other employees spotted the gunbearer station in Pasay City yesterday morning, the cash containing P142,000 in cash were already gone, PO1 Orlando Murillo told one of the cashiers discovered the theft when she opened the office at 6 a.m. yesterday. The victim, owned by 42-year-old Fernando Bautista, was closed at 10 p.m. Sunday, leaving Murillo and other investigators to believe the thief was an insider of Bautista's gasoline station. The missing cash was the station's earnings for the weekend, Murillo added.

Vilma C. Tandoc Jr.

UE Caloocan Week

THE UNIVERSITY of the East-Caloocan will celebrate the 42nd UE-Caloocan Week on Feb. 14 to 19 with the theme, "Taking a Big Leap Toward Excellence and Recognition." Among the activities are career orientation, a campus beat for campus high school students, beauty, sports fair, quiz shows, tennis, 10-ball, disc showing, concerts, stage plays and a beauty pageant. The college officials invite students to grace during the entire UE-Caloocan Week. For more information, please contact 363 08 53, 366 93 81 and 363 11 88 or log onto www.ue.edu.ph.

Seniors protest drug firm decision

By Jocelyn R. Uy

AROUND 80 SENIOR CITIZENS YESTERDAY held a protest rally in front of the Makati Hall of Justice where a giant pharmaceutical company has filed a patent suit against the government.

Pfizer's decision to push through with the case to stop the government from importing Norvasc, an antihypertension drug, from India, has caused her blood pressure to shoot up, Gloria Gomez, 82, a member of the Gat Dat Gan, Gat Dat Pato Network (GDPNet), told the reporter.

"I hope they will change policy or ask us because we cannot afford very expensive medicines," said Gomez, who added that she takes the drug to keep her blood pressure at a normal level.

Her senior also needs to take the medicine daily, she said.

Pfizer sells Norvasc at P94.75 per 5 mg tablet. The 10-mg tablet, on the other hand, is priced at P74.30/each.

The same drug, however, which is sold in India under the brand name Amlopress, sells only at P6 for the 5 mg tablet and P9 for the 10 mg tablet, according to Dubon, an international consultant and advocacy organization involved in the fight against poverty.

Pfizer sued the Philippine International Trading Corp. (PITC) and the Bureau of Food and Drug (BFAD) for importing samples of the drug from India which have been submitted for registration to BFAD.

The government plans to start looking for a similar drug that can immediately ensure the market when the Pfizer-controlled patent expires in June this year.

"The foreign pharmaceutical companies have resorted to filing court cases and other legal suits every time their commercial and profit interests are threatened by public health safeguards," Dubon spokesperson Shalimar Tiran said in a statement.

Members of Unlaco and the Coalition for Older Persons' Associations of the Philippines were also in attendance yesterday. The latter, meanwhile, urged Judge Cesar Untalan of the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 149 to junk the case filed by Pfizer.

They lambasted the country made of red and white ballroom which they later released into the sky. The prayer rally coincided with the resumption of the court hearings on the case which was filed by Pfizer in January 2000.

However, the hearing was adjourned after Secretary Roberto Pagdanganan, head of PITC, failed to show up on time for cross-examination.

Pfizer's lawyers asked Untalan to reset the hearing to Feb. 15.

SENIOR citizens pray for the worry-free recovery of cheaper-priced medicine during a rally yesterday in Makati City. PHOTO BY

'60s idol Cliff Richard back for concert

By Tara Quinsaat

BRITISH singer Cliff Richard (right) is back in the country for a Valentine concert. JOY CUNA

SITTING AFTER MORE THAN 20 years, British recording artist Cliff Richard arrived in Manila yesterday afternoon for his pre-Valentine concert at the Araneta Coliseum tonight.

Richard, the voice behind pop hits "Devil Woman" and "Summer Holiday," arrived with a 24-man entourage, including his 11-piece band, on board Philippine Airlines flight PR 504 from Singapore.

Local media's 30 minutes-per-concert production welcomed Richard at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Centennial Terminal, where the singer obligingly signed autographs and posed for pictures with some airport staff.

Richard is here for the Manila stop of his "Time and Here Tour 2001," which began in the Wembley Arena in London on Nov. 4, 2000.

The tour includes stops in South Africa, Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

Richard's last visit to Manila was in 1986.

DID YOU KNOW

ON FEB. 13, 1900, exactly one years ago, Pandacan became a city by virtue of Republic Act 6627. The city has a population of roughly 450,000 people in area which covers almost 5,000 hectares. Pandacan was called Pamayang when it was founded as a town in 1572. With the coming of Americans rule, Pandacan was one of the first towns to have a municipal government. It was also one of the first municipalities to be liberated from Japanese forces at the height of World War II.

Cyril L. Abrahante, regular Research

GMA's pride cause of her temper outburst

ON TARGET
RANNIE RAZO

PANTED: ROMAN WITH BULdog, temper—become headline, inside page, Feb. 13 issue.

No, the headline was not referring to President Macapagal-Arroyo, although many citizens no longer want her at the top.

Mr. Arroyo's temper tantrums are not doing her any good. And that's putting it mildly.

People are turned off by a spectacle of their President hitting the airwaves and bombarding her subordinates and reporters in public. They look at her as arrogant and overbearing.

The presidential outburst in public last week alienated some more people who used about it. The rumor of his Arroyo's temper tantrum was a question on the state of the economy posed by an incisive reporter.

Apparently she couldn't answer the question straight, so she answered on what she's known or perceived to be: Showing her fangs.

Palde makes the President act the way she does in public when she feels embarrassed by a comment or question.

One wonders how she treated her intelligent students of economics in his lectures who asked very difficult questions.

Did she show her superiority by greeting irritated at the "impertinent" question?

She's not the only Chief Executive who can't take it in his stride when one is in power.

But the specter of a leader stays when power gets to the head.

Senate President Manny Villar and his wife, Rep. Cynthia Villar, were persecuted by police guards Arroz entering exited Presidential Kings Palace, Hotel center when they dropped in for a visit.

The Villars were told there was a plot by the communist rebels to kill the detained former leader.

Do you grasp? Did the police guards think the Senate President and his congresswoman wife were possible assassins?

But that was only an excuse to make it hard for members of the opposition to meet with ousted president and plot their election strategy.

Of course, the order came from the Palace! Where else?

With Director General Oscar Calderon, the President's relative, at the helm of the Philippine National Police (PNP), Malacañang's candor will be felt loudest to the letter.

The story of Philippine Tourism Authority General Manager Robert Jesse Barbers that he and his family were targets of a failed kidnap attempt in Batangas runs counter credibility.

If there really was a kidnap plot, then they were very lucky indeed because their would-be kidnappers were either stupid or plain cowards.

If the people that the young Barbers said were out to kidnap him and his family were really kidnappers, they would have grabbed the fifteen when he alighted from his vehicle.

They would have gone out from their vehicle simultaneously with guns in hand, or their companions in a back up car would have gone behind Barbers while his attention was diverted on the people inside the car in front of him.

It looked like it was a traffic incident involving Barbers and the occupants of the other car.

Nuke talks hang; breakthrough up to North Korea, envoys say

BEIJING—ENVOYS TO TALKS on North Korea's nuclear program said the possibility of a breakthrough rested solely with Pyongyang, as negotiations entered their final scheduled day Monday with little hope for progress.

Over the previous four days, the six-country talks in Beijing have stalled over disagreements on energy assistance for the North in exchange for its shutdown of nuclear weapons.

"It is up to the North Koreans. We have put everything on the table. We have offered a way forward on a number of issues. They just need to make a decision," U.S. assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill told reporters before Monday's session.

His comments were echoed by Japanese envoy Kenichiro Sasae, whose government has been fiercely critical of North Korea, and South Korean negotiator Chun Yung-woo, whose leaders have often appeared more accommodating.

Breaking an agreement "hangs greatly on the response, on final intents, that North Korea brings today," Sasae said.

The current round of six-nation talks began on a promising note after the United States and North Korea signaled a willingness to compromise. But negotiators quickly became mired on a sticky issue—the amount of energy the communist country would be awarded for disarming.

"There is no dissent among the chief delegates that we need to draw a conclusion, an outcome, today," said South Korea's Chun.

That China, ending a last-minute visit, met separately with the South Koreans and US delegation Monday morning before the Americans and South Koreans were set to hold one-on-one talks.

But Pyongyang was giving few signs it would compromise, a South Korean official said. Monday afternoon, "North Korea's position is still not within a range acceptable to us," the official said on condition of anonymity because of the ongoing diplomacy.

Adding pressure on the delegates was a sense that failure to reach an agreement this time could permanently doom the talks.

The negotiations—which include the two Koreas, the US, Japan, China and Russia—have plodded on intermittently for more than three years.

Washington and Tokyo, in particular, have questioned the usefulness of continuing without results.

"There's a certain life cycle to these negotiations," Hill said Monday. If North Korea rejects the current proposal, the Asian's two diplomats speculated that there would "be some political climate change. It may be the US, there maybe among some other countries."

But he added, "I don't want to predict that this is the last chance."

Negotiators had hoped the latest round would result in North Korea taking its first concrete steps in dismantling its nuclear program, an issue that became especially critical after the North conducted its first nuclear test explosion in October.

The North Korean and Japanese media reports gave varying accounts of how much energy North Korea was demanding, from 2 million kilowatts of electricity to 2 million tons of heavy fuel oil. AP

NORTH Korean soldiers run against a train on the bank of the Yalu River near the North Korean town of Sinuiju Feb. 13. Talks on the future of North Korea's nuclear arms program entered a fifth day on Monday with negotiators scrambling for progress. REUTERS

Socialist Royal unveils 100 ideas 'to make France strong'

VILLEPINTE, FRANCE—SOCialist candidate Segolene Royal revised her flagging presidential campaign on Sunday, unveiling 100 proposals she said would make France a stronger, fairer place.

The politician wrote during up following 6,000 nationwide debates and focused on economic, social and environmental issues, pushing Royal to the left of the political spectrum.

"I feel today that I am in a position to offer you something more than a program. It is a pact of hope, a presidential pact that I propose to you all," Royal said, during a two-hour speech to 15,000 flag-waving, cheering supporters.

Her pact contained promises to boost small pensions by 5 percent, to consolidate the 35-hour work week, to lift the minimum wage to 1,500 euros ($1,940) from 1,254 euros and establish a military-style boot camp for young offenders.

She also included controversial promises to set up "citizens' juries" to evaluate the work of parliamentarians, and pledged to reduce class sizes, let big-earning oil companies with a special levy and make it harder for France to shift production abroad.

Royal, 53, won her party's nomination in November and appeared on course to become France's first woman president, but has since fallen behind her right-at-rival Nicolas Sarkozy, hit by a string of gaffes and signs of internal party dissent. Reuters

FRENCH Socialist Party presidential candidate Segolene Royal at a political rally Feb. 11. REUTERS

WORLDBRIEFS

Newer breast cancer drugs save lives, study finds

BOSTON—Women who switch from the breast cancer pill tamoxifen to a more class of drugs called aromatase inhibitors live longer, Italian researchers reported on Monday. Their study, published in the journal Cancer, adds to a growing body of evidence that the new drugs are far safer, preventing cancer with fewer side effects than tamoxifen. Dr. Lauren Gansell of Lenox Hill Hospital in New York said the research is changing how doctors in the United States treat women after their tumours are surgically removed. "If they have been on tamoxifen we are switching them to an aromatase inhibitor. If they are newly diagnosed we are using an aromatase inhibitor instead of tamoxifen," she said in a statement. Breast cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer death among US women, after lung cancer. More than 200,000 people are diagnosed are another roughly 40,000 die from it each year, according to the American Cancer Society. Reuters

Israel testfires antimissile system in 'message' to Iran

JERUSALEM—Israel carried out a successful night time test of its Arrow 2 missile defence system Sunday in what public television described as a "message to Iran." The defense ministry confirmed the test-firing, the first since December 2006 when the military announced the system was fully operational. "This test-firing was aimed at checking the functioning of the Arrow at night and in extreme conditions against a ballistic missile," a ministry statement said. "All the system's components worked perfectly." AFP

Jerusalem mayor suspends renovations near mosque

JERUSALEM—The mayor of Jerusalem has suspended controversial work near the revered Al-Aqsa mosque announced by the city's Old Town chief after another Islamic shrine between Palestinian protestors and police. Israeli military radio reported Mayor Uri Lupolianski announced late Sunday the suspension of work to a disengaged observer group leading to the mosque that has angered Muslims across the world and which the Arab League on Sunday called a "criminal attack." More than 1,000 Israeli police had been deployed to keep an uneasy peace around the mosque – known to Muslims as Haram al-Sharif or Noble Sanctuary, and to Jews as Temple Mount – after two days of violent clashes in which dozens were wounded in Jerusalem and parts of the occupied West Bank. Israeli police have denied claims by Muslim worshippers and Palestinians that the Old Basin in the Al-Aqsa mosque compound, linked to their holiest shrine. AFP

Portugal to legalize abortion

LISBON—Portugal's Prime Minister Jose Socrates assured Sunday to legalize abortion after voters backed the move in a referendum even though turnout was not high enough to make it binding. Nearly 60 percent of those who cast ballots in the predominantly Roman Catholic country approved parliament's proposal to give all women the right to an abortion up to the 10th week of pregnancy, according to official final results. Socrates pledged his Socialist government will now use its parliamentary majority to legalize abortion. Abortion is currently allowed only in cases of rape, serious fetal abnormalities or if the woman's well-being is in danger. Neither the 27-nation European Union only Ireland, Malta and Poland have abortion laws that are stricter or were more restrictive. AFP

Putin is latest to raise tensions at Munich meeting

MUNICH, GERMANY—RUSSIAN PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin has helped restore cross-tradition by using an annual conference in Munich to denounce diplomatic sources and pick a fight.

He used this year's high-profile security get-together in Germany to accuse the United States of spurring a new arms race by trying to become the world's "one single master," a speech one US senator said matched Cold War rhetoric.

This is not the first time that the diplomatic gloves have been removed at this gathering of the world's top defense and security officials in the Bavarian state capital, known for its beer halls, baroque architecture and cheerful history.

Last year German Chancellor Angela Merkel likened Iran's nuclear plans—which the West believes are designed to build bombs—to the threat posed by the Nazis in their early days.

And in 2003, German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer declared he did not believe the US case for invading Iraq, which it did a month later—just after US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld had presented that case to the audience.

"I am not convinced. That is my problem. I cannot go to the public and say these are the reasons because I don't believe in them," Fischer said, his forthright comment contributing to a long-lasting souring of US-German relations.

"People like to pick fights at the Munich conference and maybe Putin wanted to launch a new Cold War at this one," a senior European official said of the meeting first held in 1962.

He said one reason was that participants were, as high-level—presidents, prime ministers and other top officials—that they weren't afraid to say what's on their mind.

The Kremlin has been hinting for weeks that Putin, who steps down next year, was preparing a major speech to point the way for future Russian foreign policy.

Tensions in Russian-US relations were obvious at the forum. The editor of weekly German newspaper Die Zeit said he avoided that the strong level of history may have been made at the 43rd Munich Conference in Security Policy.

"I do hope historians in future don't say an echoes would war broke out here," Josef Joffe said. Reuters

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATIONS FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMITS (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
EMIRATES AIRLINES	Wayne Brian Lacey	Licensed Aircraft Engineer
MAPFRE INSULARE SERVICES, INC.	Eisuke Miyama	Japanese Support Engineer
LG 29 FOODSTORE INC.	Byung Ji Cho	Marketing Manager
ALMO WALL ALUMINUM INTERNATIONAL, INC.	Ok Mee Lee	General Manager and Chief Executive Officer
MAPFRE INSULARE SERVICES, INC.	Eduardo Ibarra	Operations Team Lead - Japan
NIPPON HOUSING PHILIPPINES, INC.	Yoshiki Kuboki	Member of the Board of Directors
BRITISH EMBASSY	James Alexander Stacey	Vice Attaché
CARNETT PHILIPPINES INC	Brian Ivo Littlemagnolen	Crew Engineer
JGC CORPORATION MANILA-ROXAS	Takahiro Nishio	Piping Engineer
JGC CORPORATION MANILA-ROXAS	Tomomi Takahashi	Piping Engineer
JGC CORPORATION MANILA-ROXAS	Akio Asaka	Piping Engineer
JGC CORPORATION MANILA-ROXAS	Hiroki Ikeda	Assistant Engineering Manager
JGC CORPORATION MANILA-ROXAS	Daiki Kobayashi	Instrument Engineer
JGC CORPORATION MANILA-ROXAS	Yoshikuni Ohki	Piping Engineer
JGC CORPORATION MANILA-ROXAS	Masaaki Kumaki	Lead Electrical Engineer
JGC CORPORATION MANILA-ROXAS	Ikuhiro Yoshimori	Piping Engineer
JGC CORPORATION MANILA-ROXAS	Ichiro Takemori	Civil Engineer
JGC CORPORATION MANILA-ROXAS	Takumi Kono	Piping Engineer
JGC CORPORATION MANILA-ROXAS	Mitsuhiro Ohishi	Piping Engineer
JGC CORPORATION MANILA-ROXAS	Yoshiki Kuwahara	Piping Engineer
JGC CORPORATION MANILA-ROXAS	Hiroshi Sagawa	Structural Engineer
KOREA POST INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHING CORPORATION	Kwang Chang	Photographer
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THE BEST LEARNING JOURNEY INC.	Won Ho Lee	HRD Manager
HSBC IS ELTRONIC DATA PROCESSING (PHILS.), INC.	Cheng Wen Lim	Assistant Vice President-Project and Planning

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES R. TREMENTOZ
Regional Director

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Casino

US says Iran arming Shiites with bombs

BAGHDAD—SOPHISTICATED Iranian-built bombs smuggled into Iraq have killed at least 170 US and allied soldiers since June 2004, senior US defense officials said Sunday, amid ongoing carnage.

The allegation that Iran is backing Shiite extremists came as suspected Sunni insurgents killed more than 30 people, most of them members of the security forces, in a spate of bomb and gun attacks in northern Iraq.

US defense officials presented their evidence at a background briefing in Baghdad's fortified Green Zone, after Washington stepped up criticism of Iran.

The allegations will feed a fierce international debate over relations with the Islamic republic, whose nuclear program is seriously at the center of mounting tension amid reports that America is readying air strikes.

"Iran is involved in supplying explosively formed projectiles or EFPs and other material to Iraqi extremist groups," a senior official from the US-led multinational coalition told journalists.

Three coalition officials not superior to point the finger at the Al Quds force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps, part of Tehran's elite forces in search of links with Iranian militants.

"The Quds force arms extremists and insurgents to carry out terrorist attacks and guerrilla warfare," he said. "The Quds Force provides advice, training and weapons to proxy forces in Iraq."

The euro spoke on conditions of anonymity for their security and cameras and recording devices were barred from the briefing, where an array of mortar shells and bomby traps were laid out for inspection.

Reporters were issued with a disc containing photographs of alleged Iranian weapons seized in Iraq—4,000 sq ft ground to air missile, EFPs and mortar shells—showing munitions dating dates in late 2006.

A senior defense analyst said US-led forces had evidence that Iran had stepped up shipments of EFPs, factory-built explosives designed to cut through armor, to armed Iraqi Shiite groups.

He said five Iranians arrested in January in the northern Iraqi city of Arbil were Al Quds force officers who had no diplomatic cover and had tried to flush documents down a toilet as they were arrested.

"We assess that these activities are coming from the senior levels of the Iranian government," he said, stating that the Al Quds brigade reports to Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The senior official said Iran's involvement was being revealed as a "force protection measure."

"They're pretty devastating," he said of the EFPs, holding up a lump of melted metal that he said had been fired through a US vehicle.

"More than 170 US and coalition troops have been killed by these things, and 620 wounded. There was a significant increase in their use over the past six months," he added.

A total of 1,112 US troops have died in Iraq, since the March 2003 invasion, according to an AFP count based on Pentagon figures, with main ally Britain suffering 132 fatalities over the same period.

Americans and allied troops first encountered Iranian-made EFPs in mid 2004, and since then US commanders have driven increased Tehran of fomenting unrest by supplying weapons, cash and training to Iraqi militants.

The device... one of which was shown to reporters by a senior coalition engineering expert—consists of a machined steel tube lined with a metal reacting and packed with explosives.

When the charge detonates, the metal reacting melts and is forced out at high velocity as a white-hot lump, cutting through the armor piercing on the target vehicle. AFP

Harvard names first female president in 371-year history

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS—HARVARD University announced Sunday that a woman is to lead the prestigious US school for the first time in its 371-year history.

Drew Gilpin Faust, a 59-year-old US Civil War scholar, was named the next president of the United States' oldest university during a special meeting of a school governing body Sunday, Harvard said in a statement.

Faust succeeds former US treasury secretary Lawrence Summers, who resigned last year after a series of public disputes and behind-the-scenes battles with faculty members.

Faust has served as an administrator at Harvard since 2001, when she became head of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study.

Prior to joining Harvard, she spent her academic career at the University of Pennsylvania, rising through the professorial ranks after receiving her doctorate there in 1975.

Her confirmation as president was widely expected after local newspapers reported last week that she was the final choice of a selection committee designed to find a permanent replacement for Summers.

Harvard is the latest elite US university to appoint a woman to the top job, following Princeton, Brown, MIT and the University of Pennsylvania. Faust said it would be wrong not to acknowledge the significance of her gender, but urged people not to dwell on it.

"I'm not the woman president of Harvard. I'm the president of Harvard," she told reporters moments after her appointment was announced.

Faust, saying she was grateful for the trust placed in her by the university's governing boards, spoke of the task ahead of her.

She indicated she may see her new job not just as leading Harvard but also championing the cause of higher education in the United States, which she noted is often hailed as world-class but also criticized as badly managed and self-indulgent.

"We find ourselves wondering in 2007 whether we... at Harvard or at any other university—have the resources, the organizational capacity, the relentlessness, and the leadership to generate continuing revolutions," she said.

"What Harvard does in this next decade will serve as an important part of the answer

FAUST

to these vast ambitions and challenges."

Faust built a reputation for consensus-building during her tenure at the Radcliffe Institute.

"She combines a powerful, broad-ranging intellect with a demonstrated capacity for strong leadership," said James Houghton, who headed Harvard's presidential search committee.

Her reputed ability to forge consensus would contrast sharply with Summers, who bruised egos as he tried to overhaul the undergraduate curriculum and reinstate power from current academic fiefdoms within the school.

Summers was never able to recover from the 2005 uproar that followed his remark that innate differences between the sexes may help explain why fewer women tend to science and math fields. AFP

WHAT'S INSIDE

- Mickelson cruises to 5-shot win

/A25

SPORTS

Editor Teddyboy S. Molavedra

Hapee, Harbour title showdown gets going

AFTER TAKING DIVERGENT PATHS TO THE finals, Hapee-PCU and Harbour Centre start their best-of-five series for the PBL Silver Cup championship today at the Olivarez College Sports Center in Parañaque.

The Youth Masters, the tournament's hottest bracket the outsiers, are eight favorites often they collide at 4 p.m. with the Jose Villanueva, who picked up seven rally late in the elimination round and needed a winner-take-all win over Toyota Otis last Saturday to reach this far.

The Toyota Otis Sparks and the Mind and More Cosmic caught at 2 pm. for third place.

Hapee made it to the finals first, ousting Mail and More, 3-1, in their best-of-five semifinal series to underscore its strength. The Youth Masters also made it to the semifinals outright.

But Harbour Centre, which is usually shooting for a second straight championship, will be riding the momentum of a thrilling semifinal win coached by the steady guiness of team JC Intal and Chino Cabahug.

The Youth Masters will again rely on the solid shooterator of Jason Castro, Mark Andersen and Larry Rodriguez, whose performances awarded Harbour Centre coach Jorge Gallent.

"They've become more dangerous and have been playing their best basketball since the series," Gallent said.

But the Hot Masters have likewise been demonstrating a lot of help from their supporting cast led by Jonathan Fernandez, Edwin Sesco, Ryan Arcilla and Allan Gondoza.

"It will be important for us to maintain playing aggressive defense," said Hapee-PCU coach Jun Intal, who also reports key contributions from forward Bienvenido Bringas and Robert Sanz.

Castro has become a mark man after the veteran guard caught fire in Harbour Center's semifinal series versus Toyota Otis with a 17.5-point norm, nearly double his 9.5 average in the eliminations.

"If Chino does well, everyone just plays well," said Gallent.

Gallent, however, points out that the Youth Masters seem to have more persistent threats with their big men also having the propensity to shoot from beyond the arc.

"They have fast, big men," he said. "Execution will be the most important thing for us."

Harbour Center and Hapee-PCU split their two meetings in the elimination round. The Youth Masters clobbered the first encounter with a 73-68 victory, with Intal still out of the line for Harbour Center.

The Hot Masters scored a payback win two rounds later, 75-67, with Intal and Fernandez leading the charge. —Jasmine M. Payo

Chess body summons suspected game-fixers

By Marlon Bernardino
Court Reporter

TEN PLAYERS SUSPECTED OF involvement in game-fixing scandal have been summoned by National Chess Federation of the Philippines president Ilay Prospero "Dumb" Pichay Jr. to present their sides today.

Silver Sweeping chess star, the NCFP board will deliberate on the report of the fact-finding committee formed by Pichay to investigate the unraveling scandal that has rocked the local chess community.

"Let's not name the accused players," said Pichay. "Anyway the public will know their views tomorrow (today) because they will defend themselves before the fact-finding committee."

The investigating team, led by NCFP directors lawyers Edmundo Legaspi and former Bangsamoro governor Kiad Mohammad, will meet with the 30 players at Manila's Restaurante in Quezon City.

According to NCFP treasurer-cum-Bulls Alcalde, also a member of the fact-finding team, each player will be given a chance to defend himself.

"The fact-finding committee had already submitted to the board all the evidences it gathered," said Alcalde. "The only thing lacking is the side of the

CONTINUED

HONDA

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JAZZ	P650,000	P67,000	P12,396	P333,000	P7,319
CIVIC	P715,000	P115,000	P15,230	P369,000	P8,909
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HONDA

Jawo ready for coaching comeback

ROBERT JAWORSKI, WHO rode his basketball prowess to a seat in the Philippine Senate, will soon return to the scene of his countless exploits as the part-time head coach of one of the most exciting teams in the Philippine Basketball Association.

Pasig Rep. Robert "Jawo" Jaworski Jr., the former senate's one-and-someday, yes, today- and his father, popularly known as the "Living Legend" of Philippine basketball, is being touted by at least two teams—Air21 and Talk 'N Text—for a celebrated comeback in the pro league.

Jawo addressed this interview with Pasig reporters that his father has already expressed willingness to return as coach and is now deciding on which team to handle.

"There's no problem, and he's still thinking which team to coach," said the young Jaworski, who initially played under his father for the Ginebra franchise in the late '80s.

He said his father would start calling the shots for either Air21 or Talk 'N Text in the imminent board of governors' meeting.

"I don't discuss a special plan or my father's heart for basketball," said Jaworski Jr. "Let's wait for his decision."

JAWORSKI

After his retirement in 1999, Jaworski ran for senator and won. Senators could be awards to also being elected senators cannot accumulate absence of the Philippine Basketball League Philippines, the unified body of the sport in the country.

As playing icon for the pro league, Jaworski captained four championships, the first the 1997 Commissioner's Cup for Gordon's Gin. He is to remember for all PBA national teams's eleven-straight finals in the 1990 Asian Games.

Winner of the MVP in the late 1979 while playing for Toyota, Jaworski saw his first championship as a playing coach in the 1986 Open Conference, when his Ginebra squad defeated Shell in four in the Finals.

Jaworski was also the co-linked player of the greatest comebacks in PBA Finals history after Gin Kings coach Norman Black left Game 3 of the 1993 Best Conference finals.

In 28 seasons in the PBA, the 46-year-old Jaworski, a six-time All-Star team member, played record of 956 games, an average of 12.23 points, 4.6 rebounds, 6.1 assists and a steal per game.

With his report from Amy Navarro

BANNWAY! Ginebra's Ronald Tolentino goes into San Miguel Beer's Lordy Tugade in Game 2. Tolentino was called for an offensive foul. AFP/MARK LAW SIMON

Young Atienza gives up Palace sports post

ARNOLD "JAY" ATIENZA has stepped down as Presidential Assistant for Youth and Sports to concentrate on his position as chair of both the Manila Sports Council (Manasc) and city hall's Youth City Development Committee.

ATIENZA

The decision was in response to an appeal from various city youth organizations in Manila for the son of Mayor Lito Atienza to help sustain the sports momentum he (Jay) had's sports zone, said Jay Inner City group.

"I would like to thank the President (Gloria Macapagal Arroyo) for giving me the opportunity to serve our country in my own humble way during my brief stint as Presidential Assistant for Youth and Sports Affairs," said Jay.

The alliance of Manila Youth Organizations (Manyo)—the umbrella organization of more than 300 youth groups in Manila led by Jason Balsamo and Boy Peace—urged Atienza's return to arrange the direction of Manila's youth through sports and social development.

As Presidential Assistant, Atienza conceived and implemented the Revolutionary Identification, Training and Exposure in Sports (Rise) sports program which chaired the beautiful of the highly successful Manila Youth Games (MY Games) with other local government units.

Chess body summons . . .

From page A33

(player)."

"If the board decides that we have a case, it might decide on it (the penalty) right away," Abtoc added.

Other members of the probe team are International Master Jayson Gonzales, Women Grand Master Rhea Lani and Grace Castro and national arbiters Fortchi Lee and Jhun Perez.

PHOMAY

At its last meeting on Feb. 1, the SCFP board decided to defer its decision on the controversial ruling the need to thoroughly review the case.

Abtoc said they had asked two other Filipino players for the second pick up from doing with the eight players earlier tagged as suspects, she declined to identify the five.

She also said that the investigating body would let Yee and Jan to still contested."

LISCHICO

Gin Kings hurting without Menk

By Jun Navarro

BAGUIO DEBRIEF WILL NOT JUMP IT BUT in his new semi-calm Mindi condition.

The Gindito dominos was the missing factor for the Gin Kings in Game 3 and he saw limited action in Game 2—which nearly Jong Uichico and with enough interest with the Kings on to 0-2 hole against same team. San Miguel Beer in the ongoing best-of-seven Finals of the PBA Philippine Cup.

Going by the results of the first two games, the Gin Kings are clearly pulling up stems at the second conference, said Joe Mindi.

Without the 2005 Most Valuable Player, the Gin Kings performance shifted by the Sun Miguel Beermen in the water opener, 120-94. Game 2, however, was an entirely different story.

MBC SCORESHEET
(Game 2)
(Araneta Coliseum)
7 p.m.—1st Half
Beer 6 Ginebra
Referees:

Though hounded for most of the game, Mindi had magnificent contributions for the Gin Kings on the floor after missing the last seven games since the semifinals with Talk 'N Text due to an injury.

"If for Mindi could play (as Game 2) it would be a big help for us," said Uichico after the late Kings performance a score before yielding 104-118, in Game 2.

Mindi manages to the 6-foot-4 hanger in Game 3, would ensure a tougher matchup for the San Miguel frontline.

In Mindi's absence, Rudy Hackett, Rafi Reavis and Billy Mitchell were overwhelmed by the collective efforts of Dondon Pelea, Gilbey Baptiste, Willy Wilson and Rommel Adducul in the shot.

"I think it is tough to be 0-2 in a best-of-seven series but it's just a one-game defeat," said Uichico. "We need to be more aggressive to defense and improve on our shooting."

The Kings, who have seven wins against the enemies in their past two Finals meetings, must close the best-of-seven series tonight. Pilib or without Mindi.

UE, Ateneo fencers bag titles; FEU nails 2 volley finals slots

By Jacqueline W. Pilapil

UNIVERSITY OF THE EAST (UE) FENCING women worked behind a multivariate player roster to capture its second straight UAAP men's team championship easy the weekend at the Rizal Eagle gym.

Rambom Jaunero emerged Most Valuable Player as he powered the UE Jeepers to a 2-0 gold-silver-bronze medallist at the end of senior action.

"For defending champions, the pressure was there," admitted UE coach Rolando Cadiz. "We trained hard every day and didn't have a complete lineup. Some of our fencers competed in different tournaments at school their specialty."

Jaunero lady Jeepers, Chicago, defeated UE table-mounting the ladies' individual with a 2-1 4 medal haul.

Ateneo Lance Gavia bagged the MVP plum, after topping the individual ball and leading Ateneo's conversion team to Ateneo title that ensured final.

The Tuesday will be Ateneo second seat to Mindo Lafayette Cortez, who won a gold in senior and a silver medal individual.

Jaunero, 20, a member of the SF junior team, outclassed teammate Dan Bing Dionisio, 15-7, to bag the gold in the individual title. He also added a gold in team-other medal after winning final.

Santo Tomas, led by Rookie of the Year Mario Bautista, was runner-up with a 21-2 rally in the men's division, with University of the Philippines clinching second in the men's with 21-12.

In women's volleyball, top-seeded Far Eastern claimed the four-cut berth after outscoring fourth-ranked UE in straight sets, 25-9, 25-18, 25-19, thanks night of the Raul Memorial Coliseum.

Mary Ann Maxido paced the Lady Tams with 14 points while rookie Marcelle Mikaela added 11 markers.

Adamson, with skipper Jeremy coming up with 11 points, forged a runner-up with in the other semifinal pairing after stunning second-seeded UST, 25-18, 25-19, 23-25, 25-23.

FEU also dumped the first downgrading Birth in men's volleyball with defeated Bulacpian having 13 kills and three aces in 4-25-20, 25-19, 25-23 triumph over National University.

FEU led by Rene Pongcil (17 attacks, league's a down the final with UP in the other final. Four team fourth at 25-16, 23-25, 25-19, 25-19 win.

GOLDEN HARVEST Members of the University of the East men's and women's cadets squads celebrate their twin victories in the UAAP boxing championships at the Rizal Eagle Gym in Kalayaan. From left, coach Chavez Junior Qy, Dondon Jaunero, Erwin Brando, Dan Bing Dionisio, Elizh Alfonso, Baicah Kurin, Mark Fernandez, and Wilmer Tolin. COURTESY UE SPORTS

Santillan pulls off points win over Japanese

FORMER ORIENTAL AND PACIFIC BOXING Federation (OPBF) welterweight champion Rey Santillan prevailed by unanimous decision over Japanese Shuta Hasegawa in their 10-round over-the-light yesterday at the Archaic Hall in Intramuros, Pasig, Japan.

Santillan punished Hasegawa en route to a 98-95, 97-95, 96-94 verdict, giving the win for yet another OPBF title clash for the Filipino.

The loser moved on Santillan's final fight moving up below using for his 40-8th against reigning champion Dennis Hikosaemo, whom the Filipino had lost once in the past.

With the win, the Bulo Governed Santillan boosts his record to 23-3-1, 16 via KO.

Santillan originally wanted to challenge Hasegawa in this card, but the champion's camp apparently asked that they be allowed another defense before he fought the Filipino.

Rey "Nonoy" Saludez, who manages Santillan, said he is now arranging his match OPBF titleholder within this year.

Editorial, Legazpi City, Contributor

SPORTSWATCH

3 amateur fights today in Fisteranza

SJC fastest-win event draws 120 entries

BY TOP CHOICE

Mickelson cruises to 5-shot win

MICKELSON hugs his daughters Sophia (left) and Amanda and sister Evan (center) after holing out victorious at Pebble Beach. AFP

PEBBLE BEACH, CALIFORNIA—PHIL MICKELSON won his first title since a shocking late collapse at last year's US Open, firing eight birdies Sunday to capture the Pebble Beach Pro-Am by a record tying five shots.

Mickelson, runner-up three Pebble Beach crowns and second to Tiger Woods, firing a six-under par 66 final round to make a 72-hole tournament record on 16-under par 268 and beat fellow American Kevin Sutherland by a record matching margin.

"This is exciting. I'm really excited with how I played this week," Mickelson said. "It's come out on top and I got 'D' started off right. It gives me great momentum for the rest of the year," Mickelson, 36, won here in 2000 and also in 1998, although that years unranked event had to be finished mostly seven months after it began.

A majors year and Masters final in last year's US Open cost Mickelson a Grand major title in a new and spotted dozen for his 2006 season.

Mickelson took a five-month break after last year's Ryder Cup and struggled in his first two events this season, shaving 45th at the Bob Hope Classic and 51st at the Buick International.

"I was hoping to play like this the first couple weeks," Mickelson said. "It didn't happen then but I'm glad it finally happened." Mickelson refused to be drawn this week, despite a possible bogey at the par 5 18th, hole where that no-shot started into the woods and was never found.

Mickelson, who had birdied the second and fourth holes, amassed eight birdies on four of the next six holes to seize the lead.

A bogey at 13 was followed by birdies on three of the last four holes to secure his 36th career victory.

This week, Mickelson shook off the poor putting that had plagued him in his three previous events and reaped in the fairways. He was tied for greens in regulation for the tournament.

"I felt very confident in my iron play," Mickelson said. "I really worked on my putting. Steve Pate came up and looked at my putting and I worked very hard at improving it."

Sutherland birdied the 18th to match sole possession of second with fellow American John Mallinger third on 274, two strokes ahead of Davis Love and England's Greg Owen.

The margin of victory gave little indication of the difficulty of Mickelson's task on Sunday.

Heavy rains overnight and early Sunday morning necessitated that 80, about and place be utilized for the fourth consecutive day, but by the time the leaders went off the skies were clear and the wind had died down.

Mickelson began the round tied with Sutherland at 12-under but quickly put distance between himself and Sutherland.

It took longer to dispatch tour rookie Mallinger, who trailed by one shot at the start. Mallinger challenged Mickelson during the front nine and held the lead briefly when he birdied on the ninth hole. He stumbled after the green in two and nearly holed his 76-foot eagle putt, settling for a tap-in birdie. AFP

Cavaliers shut down Lakers; Wolves deal Celts' 18th loss

CLEVELAND—LEBRON JAMES scored 33 points in the fourth quarter, pulling up the clock for LeBron James, and the Cleveland Cavaliers shut down Kobe Bryant in the final minutes for a 99-96 win over the Los Angeles Lakers on Sunday.

Bryant, suddenly a super cog in Cleveland's offense, finished with 21 points, Delonte Ilgauskas 17 and Anderson Varejao 12—31 in the fourth quarter as the Cavaliers improved to 26-7 at home with their second straight solid effort.

James had 16 points, eight rebounds and five assists, but he deferred to Bryant and others down the stretch, and Cleveland's supporting cast came through. James was outscored 20-7 by Bryant in the second half, but the All-Star forward got to cross the Cavs' win with a roaring clank in the final seconds.

Bryant scored 16 points to lead the Lakers, who reach 2-0 on an eight-game swing through the bitterly cold San Bryant scored Los Angeles' first 14 points in the final period, but with Larry Hugh on guarding him, he didn't score again in the final 6:30 after making two free throws to tie it 91-all.

At Minneapolis, Kirby Irons' jumper from the corner with 0.2 seconds remaining sank the Celtics' first franchise record 18th straight loss, 100-98.

Chris Richard with 28 points, Kevin Garnett had 26 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists and another former Celtic, Mark Blount, added 20 points for the Timberwolves.

At Phoenix, Eric Piatkowski scored 14 of his 29 points in the fourth quarter, and Chicago completed a seven-game road trip with a 116-103 victory over the short-handed Suns.

Phoenix played without Steve Nash, the league's two-time defending MVP for the third consecutive game — the last two of them losses — because of a sore right shoulder. The Suns also didn't have starter Boris Diaw because of back spasms.

At Miami, Dwyane Wade scored 28 of his 36 points in the fourth quarter and the Heat held San Antonio without a field goal for more than seven minutes down the stretch to prevail, 106-95.

Wade hit seven of 10 field goals in the final period, had several blocks against Tony Parker and added seven assists as Miami beat San Antonio for the second time since Feb. 1, 2005.

At Indianapolis, Antonio O'Neal scored 21 points and set an Indiana franchise record for steals (seven) as the Pacers ripped the LA Clippers, 94-88.

The Pacers took control with a 10-0 run at the end of the second quarter and built their lead to 25 points early in the third period.

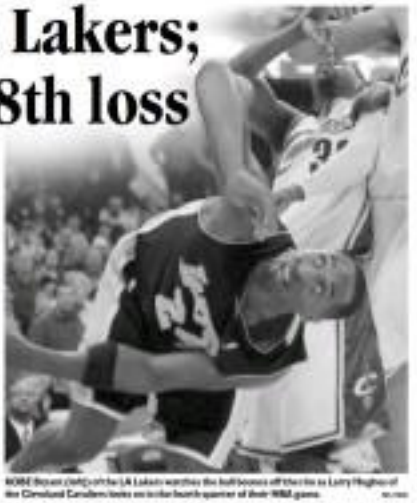
At Washington, Jarrett Jack and LaMarcus Aldridge turned 18 points apiece and the Portland Trail Blazers held Gilbert Arenas to nine points en route to a 94-73 thumping of the Wizards.

At Sacramento, California, Bay Allen scored 25 points and tied a key 3-pointer late in the fourth quarter to help Seattle win its second straight road game, 114-103, following a franchise-worst 15-game skid away from home.

At Oakland, California, Josh Smith scored 11 of his 29 points in Atlanta's big first quarter and also had 10 rebounds, leading the Hawks to their fifth straight road victory, 106-103. AP

NBA on TV today

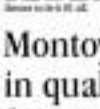
8:30 a.m.—GS Clippers vs Detroit (replays at 4 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.)



KOBE Bryant (left) of the LA Lakers watches the ball bounce off the rim as Larry Hughes of the Cleveland Cavaliers looks on in the fourth quarter of their NBA game. REUTERS

Montoya 4th in qualifying for Daytona

DAYTONA BEACH, FLORIDA—COLOMBIA'S Juan Pablo Montoya finished fourth in pole qualifying Sunday for next week's 49th Daytona 500 at the Daytona Formula One star's first official run at the famed 2.5-mile oval.



MONTOYA

But thanks to the unique inner-track configuration at the season-opening showcase of the 18 stand-carlepit series, it will be Thursday's Budweiser Shootout winners who move to the front row for the Feb. 18 season-opener when the field is set Saturday.

Montoya's lap of 190.109 mph, becoming only the fourth man to claim the pole in his first try. Gilliland's teammate Ricky Rudd was second in 189.329 to join him in the front row.

Behind the Robert Yates Racing drivers was Monster's Clint Gilmore Racing teammate David Stremme at 188.467 mph followed by the South American one at 188.104 mph.

The competition was mainly about deciding the front row since only the two top finishers ended their spots in next Sunday's 40-car field.

Daytona 500 starting spots were already guaranteed to Montoya and other drivers in the 36 leading cars based upon last season's owner points.

But the complete starting lineup will be based upon the results of two qualifying races on Thursday. Winners will race to the second of three, starting at the second row behind Stahl. AFP

Russians rip world mark

VOLGOGRAD, RUSSIA—THE RUSSIAN TEAM set the world indoor record in the men's 4x400 meters women's relay at the national military championships on Sunday. Anna Balakshina, Natalia Nazarkina, Anna Nazarkina and Olesya Chumakova clocked eight minutes 10.54 seconds to beat the mark of 8:16.71 set by another Russian quartet at an international athletics meet in Moscow 13 years ago. Reuters

Belgium pips Australia; Russia wards off Chile

LONDON—AUSTRALIA WAS eliminated from the Davis Cup on Sunday, losing to Belgium, 3-2, in the first round.

Defending champion Russia, however, survived a scare from Chile and advanced to the quarterfinals of the World Group with a 3-2 win.

Spain, the United States, Argentina, Germany, Russia and Slovakia also advanced to the last eight — each with a match to spare — in their best-of-five series.

Irakli Vlagos delivered the winning point for host Belgium in Liege, beating Chris Guccione, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4, in the second reverse singles match. Earlier, Olivier Rochus beat Australia's No. 1 Lleyton Hewitt, 6-2, 6-3, 6-7 (4), 2-6, 6-1.

"This is phenomenal," said Vlagos, who beat Hewitt in five sets at Friday. "It's the biggest moment of my career — ever."

Fernando Gonzalez beat Marcos Baghdatis, 6-3, 7-5, 6-4, to put Chile even with visiting Russia at La Serena, but Igor Andreev finished it off by downing Nicolas Massu, 6-3, 6-1, 6-7 (11), 6-4.

Andreev, playing without the injured Rafael Nadal, beat Switzerland, 7-5, in Geneva. Fernando Verdasco earned the winning point by downing Stephane Bohli, 6-3, 6-3, 6-2.

The Americans, who beat the Czech Republic, 4-1, got their deciding point from Andy Roddick, who is 9-0 with victory on the line. The Fourth ranked Roddick beat Tomas Berdych, 4-6, 6-2, 6-2, 7-6 (3).

Hewitt, the weight of the situation gone, it definitely could be one of my best matches so far," Roddick said.

Roddick was served the final point for the 31-time champions by hosting team Dooby, 7-6 (5), 6-4, 6-Dooby, Dooby.

Also, it was: France 4, Romania 1; Germany 3, Croatia 2; Sweden 3, Belarus 2; and Argentina 4, Austria 1.

In the quarterfinals in April, the United States will face Spain, France will host Germany, Germany takes on Sweden and Sweden plays Argentina.

Williams converted five of eight break points and took advantage of Serbia's 33 unforced errors. Marco Chiudinelli beat Daniel Brands, 3-6, 6-2, 6-7, in the fifth rubber.

The second-ranked Hrubá was expected to play in the first round, but he injured a muscle in training before Friday's opening singles. Hrubá replaced the injured Jaroslav Hrubá. Top-ranked Roger Federer rested himself out of the match in November. AP

Mosley looks ahead to bigger bouts at 35

LAS VEGAS—SUGAR MOSLEY looked as good (but even Floyd Mayweather Jr. paid him some grudging respect.

"He's pretty good at what he does," Mayweather said.

What Mosley did Saturday night was right back. On check with a win over Luis Collazo that was impressive for several reasons. In doing so he also staked a claim as the second-best welterweight in the world behind May-weather.

But a bad night's work for a 35-year-old boxer who seems to be coming into his second prime at an age when most others are long gone from the sport.

"I want to keep myself in shape and maybe fight again in June," Mosley said. "I am going to keep myself in shape and stand up."

Mosley moved back to 68 1/2-kilos (147 pounds) for the first time in nearly five years, promising he would be faster and better than before. He delivered on those promises by consistently beating an opponent 10 years younger to the punch and winning a lopsided 12-round decision.

Mosley, who was smiling when he entered the ring and smiling after almost every round, also showed he still has some snap as he dropped Collazo with a right hand late in the 11th round.

"It feels good to be a welterweight again," Mosley said.

The win gave Mosley what the World Boxing Council said was an interim title that he will collect when Mayweather gets through with his May 5 super welterweight fight against Oscar De La Hoya. But the title doesn't make much difference for a boxer who seems to energized.

There are now two bigger fights ahead, including a possible fight with Miguel Cotto in June and maybe later a fight with Mayweather, who figures to return to the welterweight division after his bout with De La Hoya.

"I respect him, but only one man can be king," Mayweather said.

Mosley earned $1 million (euro770,000) and raised his record to 44-4 against a tough left-hander who fought hard but didn't have the speed or experience of his older opponent. Collazo said he hurt his left hand in the third round, but it likely wouldn't have made a difference in a fight where Mosley consistently got off the first punches.

Ringside pounds maintain elusive Mosley landing 200 of 567 punches to 87 of 639 for Collazo, who briefly held a piece of the welterweight title before losing a controversial decision to Ricky Hatton last year.

"I wish I could have been more effective," Collazo said. "But that was the best I could do." AP

MOSLEY: Sanctioned prime

SPORTS

POC okay for BAP-SBP a done deal

By Jane Manuero

EXCEPT FOR A MINOR HITCH, THE DOCUMENTS OF the BAP-Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas passed the scrutiny of the Philippine Olympic Committee membership committee with flying colors.

Jacinto Ong, Monico Puentevella, POC vice president and head of the Olympic body's membership committee, said the new organization has complied with the "essential requirements for recognition."

Puentevella said the incumbents facing of new BAP-SBP officers will not prevent the POC executive board from holding the general assembly on Friday.

The BAP-SBP needs a vote of at least two-thirds of the 45 national sports associations under the POC to receive accreditation—a requirement issued by the Fiba (International Basketball Federation) before it lifts its suspension on the country.

"After scrutinizing the documents they submitted, I will recommend that the new national sports association for basketball be recognized by the POC," said Puentevella.

The membership committee will make the recommendation to the POC executive board on Thursday to pave the way for a general assembly the next day.

Puentevella, also the weightlifting chief, will present the application for membership of the BAP-SBP before the general assembly, which, if sanctioned, will become the organization recognition on accreditation's basis.

"Their documentary are now complete, but it's only a minor problem," said Puentevella.

BAP-SBP officials have left the position of executive director vacant. Its officers, led by tycoon Manny V. Pangilinan as president, will serve in an interim capacity until the group holds an election in 2008.

"It's a minor problem that can be corrected later," said Puentevella. "What's important is the acceptance of the POC executive board and the general assembly."

After securing accreditation from the Olympic body, the BAP-SBP will forward the documents to the Fiba. Once the organization is lifted, the POC will automatically allow the BAP-SBP as a regular member.

PUENTEVELLA

PANGILINAN

Inquirer team rules NPC badminton tilt

THE INQUIRER COMPLETED its mastery of the Makati republic rule the Inter-Press Executive Press Club (NPC) Tri-Media Badminton Championship over the weekend at the Rizal Memorial Badminton Center.

Inquirer—made up of Reggie Reyes, Gigi Libby, Dean Dundee, Gerie Lagman, Jay Arnold and Roberto Bacomo—topped Malaya 8, 2-1, in the best-of-three finals of the two-day tournament participated in by 11 teams from dailies, net publications, radio stations and television networks.

Inquirer, however, survived Malaya A, 2-1, in the crossover semifinals. Malaya A finished third after sniping The Manila Standard-Today, 2-1.

Reyes and Libby beat the duo of Senen Ignacio and Jhong David, 21-9, 21-16, in ladies doubles before Dundee and Lagman bested Sonny Perry and Conrad Dorena, 21-10, 21-15, in the deciding mixed doubles.

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NPC secretary Louie Logarta of the Tribune awarded the trophies and gift packs to the winners.

STRONGEST PINOY SETS RECORD: Eddie Torres of Team Sports Nutrition International Whey Protein and Zoe Power Gym squats 711 pounds en route to a combined lift of 1,057 lbs. (squat, dead lift and bench press)—a new national record—at the 2007 Philippine Weightlifting Power-Lifting Championships. Torres, the strongest Filipino of all time, bagged the gold medal and best lifter awards. Teammate Lily Pecanna, the all-time strongest Filipina, posted a combined lift of 1, 151 lbs. to likewise bag the gold medal and best lifter awards.

Pasig River int'l marathon kicks off Feb. 25

THE PHILIPPINE INSTITUTE FOR THE PASIG River (PHPI), the country's only internationally accredited marathon, flies off Feb. 25 in Intramuros, Manila, with a foreign-flavored cast expected to top last year's 800-strong starting field.

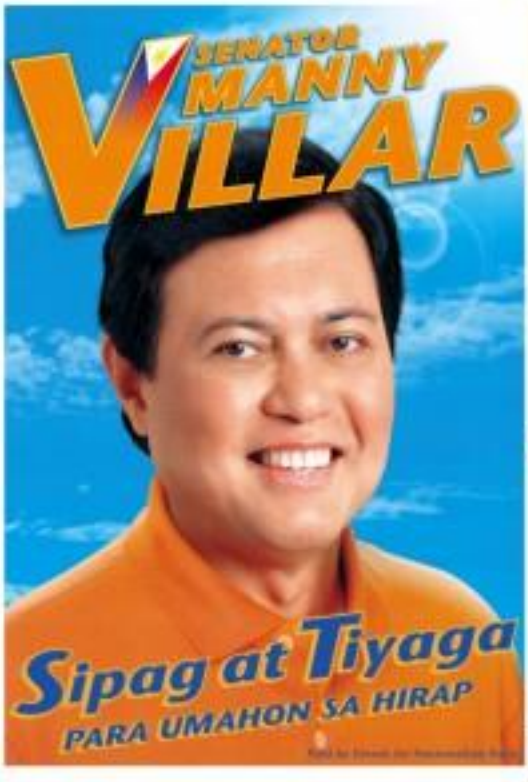
The third edition of the marathon is being staged by both the International Association of Athletic Federations and the Association of International Marathons and Road Races.

The race will take the runners along the river's banks and cross 11 of its 13 bridges. To be fired off at exactly 6:30 a.m., the 42K marathon will end at the Global City in Taguig.

The organizing Ciyashi Grass Foundation Inc. said registration is ongoing for the 42K and for the 5K, 2K and 10K mini events at the Global City.

The race has grown from a field of 30 participants in 2005 to 1,000—including world-ranked Kenyan Joseph Mpopoje Ntushuga who finished 10th—last year.

Winners of the race earn world-ranking points and qualifications to other international races such as the Boston, New York, London, Berlin, Rome marathons.



Borromeo, Ilagan top AIM golf

JUN BORROMEO EMERGED OVERALL champion with a net 71 while Noel Ilagan won low gross honors with an 80 in the recent 5th Masters Golf tournament held in conjunction with the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) at the Sherwood Hills course in Tanay-Rizal in Cavite.

Mac Panaligan also grabbed the limelight by topping Class A with a net 71 and then confirming with Angel Ilagan to cop the 4-man championship with an aggregate score of 140 in the benefit tournament presented by Smart Gold, Petron and Panasonic.

Joel Bryce ruled Class B with a net 72, while the Class B team championship went to Ben Ilac, Catalino and Felipe Diego. A net 77 gave Allen Ben Rocio the Class C individual crown while the team championship went to Alex Tanamegan and Jaja Rivera.

A total of 56 AIM alumni and guests participated in the competition held as a fund-raising activity of the AIM Alumni Association headed by its dean Eduardo Bautista for its various scholarship programs for the underprivileged students and other projects.

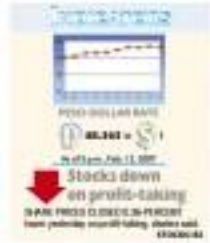
Pitoyo, together with AIMAA vice chair Ramon de Vera presented the trophies and prizes to the top members at the awarding ceremonies of the event organized by Philippine Sports.

The fund-raiser also drew assistance from Pagcor, Ayala Land, Intersystem, Johnnie Walker, Citibank, Milcom, Reliance Lifestyle Fitness Club, Terra Wellness and Spa, and Basement Suites.

BUSINESS

Editor Raul G. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano

Treasury sets terms for ₱50-B bond swap



Caps yield at 5.5% for 3-year paper

By Michelle V. Rivera

THE BUREAU OF THE TREASURY HAS SET THE TERMS FOR THE P50-billion bond exchange program, the first swap for this year aimed at boosting liquidity and stretching the average maturity of the government's debt burden.

The Treasury said the 3-year bonds that the government would swap with old government securities will carry a coupon rate of 5.5 percent, while the 5-year bonds will have a coupon rate of 5.75 percent.

The rates are lower than the 6.5 percent set by the Treasury during its bond exchange program for the 3- and 5-year bonds in February last year.

A bond swap is one of the strategies used by the government to manage the government's liabilities. A swap helps stretch the average maturity of the government's debt and reduce the cost of its borrowings.

The average maturity of the government's debt is lengthened through a swap because an investor who holds a maturing government debt note is invited to swap this for a new 3- or 5-year bond.

Under the latest bond exchange program, holders of government securities that will mature between March 1 this year and Feb. 27, 2012, may swap these debt instruments with either the new 3- or 5-year bonds.

Those who hold government securities that will mature on Feb. 22, 2010, or Feb. 21, 2012, may swap them for the new 5-year bonds. The offering period for the swap will run until Feb. 15.

TREASURY SEE

IN THIS ISSUE

Ecozone expects to reel in P917M /B4

My 10th wedding anniversary

TOMORROW IS NOT ONLY VALENTINE'S day, it is also our 10th wedding anniversary. My wife went out and bought a beautiful dress and I bought an energy lamp only with black underwear. I ordered some plants some but they died, my plastic goldfish died and my hair dyed, a psychiatrist gave Mr wife sedatives. We tried to make a reservation at the Grotto Spoon but it was closed due to an outbreak of cholera. Last year, it was typhoid but they found the typhoid carrier and sold her to the US Navy.

There are tried Quick Bells but it was hella full so we will probably go to the Shangri La. You can't fly to the hotel, just outside in the car park, where we can eat our sandwiches. I have just written my first novel, "O is you' with Mrs. Bearbull" and it is available in Newspaper from my bookshop. You will find it in between Stephen King and Anne Rice.

Did you know that tea is hereditary? If your parents never had it, then you are unlikely to have it.

A man is sitting in his living room when the doorbell rings. Outside, he finds a 6-foot cockroach that punches him in the face and leaves. Next night, he answers the doorbell and there is the same 6-foot cockroach, which punches him in the abdomen. The following night, he cautiously answers the door and the 6-foot cockroach kisses him in the groin. He staggers to the lift and tells the doctor, "I can't take any more of this." "Sorry," replies the MD, "there's a nasty bug going around."

If lost in the desert, take ringes and an iron supplement. This will turn you into a perfect compass.

* * *

BUSINESSWIRE has just finished his first year at PEO but and everyone is pleased with his performance. The job creation figures pleased the market as it fell from a revised 205,000 to 111,000 and the unemployment rate rose to 4.4 percent. Never still, the hourly wage increase slowed from 0.5 percent to an acceptable figure. As for the economy, the economy is slowing and as it inflation. So change in interest rates are expected for some time.

Here, the election race is just warming up and there are already 62 presidential candidates without my registration. Pacquiao is rumoring for mayor and should win by a knockout. So many candidates have changed sides that I don't know who is who. I doubt if it matters much as there is no party system here. This is more important than opting for a parliamentary system.

The editor of the Business Section is complaining with international practice so I can now mention casinos. Most of you guessed that I was referring to GSIS. My article was perfectly timed as GSIS confirmed to the PSE that it had invested ninety-five to 2 loss grade nickel deposits in Zambales. The mining rights of Camarine Mining and Exposito Mining bring the company's nickel mining concessions to 28,465 hectares.

GSIS said it might acquire the rights either through a property per share swap or a share-per-share swap or mostly through a cash transaction to address dilution concerns. The swap is now possible because the share price has reached its par value of P1. Valuation of the mining investments would be conducted by local or international mining consultants.

I first became interested in GSIS on Nov. 16, when the company announced a letter of intent to enter into a swap agreement with Bunawa Mining, a listed Australian mining company. I found that GSIS was going to model itself on Ayala Corporation, both diversified and highly successful companies. For example, Silverus operates in 38 concessions and has interests in copper, coal, iron, nickel, metallurgical and zinc with additional exposure to gold, lead and silver. The Philippines had a wide variety of minerals valued at $1 million so any company following this business model should be successful. Furthermore, we are geographically close to China.

So I bought GSI for myself and recommended it to all my friends. Despite the rise in the share price, everyone still has their original stake and they are in for the long term, it may be Citizens company is encouraged by regime of the country with interests in nickel, gold and copper. GSI is potentially a unit trust of mining firms and should be valued as such.

For further information, go to www.gsi.com.ph. It is an excellent website and logs up to date so that everybody gets information at the same time. The idea is to ensure transparency. GSI is also committed to make sure that their partners' respect environmental concerns and look after the surrounding communities. I like the way the company is being run.

I felt feeling very depressed today. 10 years ago, my ex-friend's father said, "Many have to you will spend the next 10 years in jail, so I did. Today, I would have been a free man."

mrbearbull@hotmail.com

Treasury sets terms for ₱50-B bond swap

From page B1

The Treasury aims to swap as much as P20 billion worth of new 3-year bonds to mature in 2004, and P20 billion worth of 5-year bonds to mature in 2011.

The government's borrowing cost is reduced by a bond swap as the new bonds usually have slightly lower interest rates than the rates imposed on the old debt securities. The government saved P10.66 billion last year due to lower share-imposed borrowing cost resulting from the bond swaps.

"We believe that these (new 3- and 5-year) bonds will be well received by the market as they are attractively priced and investors still favorable (have the expected) liquidity of the new bonds," National Treasurer Omar Cruz said.

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Stocks

From page B1

They said investors watched profits to other stocks, mostly second and third-liners, considered to have positive end-bonus.

The composite index rose about 11.60 points at 1,334.16 after trading between 1,320.88 and 1,345.44. The broader all-share index fell 12.00 points to 2,000.69.

Losers led gainers 58 to 30 with 34 stocks unchanged. Turnover was 2.8 billion shares worth P2.8 billion.

"The market is in a corrective mode," said Ilan Rodrigo, research head at Unicapital Securities.

"Investors think it's better for them to pocket some gains for now, stay on the sidelines and wait for fresh leads," he said.

Top-traded Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. fell P30 to P2,520 reaching the decline in its dominant Depository Receipts on Friday.

Conglomerate were also hit by profit-taking, with SM Investments Corp. down P7.50 at P180, while Ayala Corp. regained P1.0 to P625.

However, buying in some blue chips allowed the market to recover some losses in late trade, with Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) and Equitable PCI Bank leading both 51-week highs. AFP

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Ayala profit up by 49% in '06

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

AYALA CORP. SAID ITS NET INCOME surged 49 percent in 2006 to P11.2 billion from P6.2 billion in 2005.

In a statement, the company said the increase was attributed to robust growth of its operating units, lower interest costs and gains from sale of assets.

Income source said Ayala Corp. gained P4.5 billion from the sale of shares in Ayala Land, Bank of the Philippine Islands and Globe Telecom; stake in Manila Peninsula; and small investments of some assets.

Ayala Land posted consolidated profit of P3.9 billion in 2006, up 7 percent from year-ago level, while consolidated revenue rose by 20 percent. Residential development revenue grew by 47 percent while

AYALA, B4

Ecozone expects to reel in ₱917M

Investments go to expansion projects

By Rowena M. Domingo

A TOTAL OF AT LEAST P917.7 MILLION in new investments has been committed to the Baguio City Economic Zone, even though the Supreme Court last year had declared that the measure should not enjoy tax perks and other incentives.

According to the Philippine Economic Zone Authority, new locator projects accounted for P118.2 million, while expansion projects covering locators took up the remaining P800.5-million.

Peza Director-for-duty for information technology Eric Meng has made the biggest commitment in terms of investments, amounting to $10.3 million, or about P514.5-million.

Meng is pursuing up two new buildings at the PEZA.

Also, Chemshpin is putting in $5.5 million, or P269.5 million, for its 1,000-ton-rail cement open-ground to mount on there.

Pacifirm provider Good of Japan is having some P52-million for a 3,200 square-meter walk, while Filipino firm HTB is investing P45.1 million for a 1,000 unit cell center.

A new entrant, Filipino firm Panoramas, is putting up P60 million for a three-story building, while another firm Edgewood, is putting in P30-million.

Meanwhile, investor-Japan service firm Investgate Japan will lay out P10 million for a 300-seat operation.

Korean firm WOW-MET will build a P20-million material export facility.

In 2000, investments to the ecozone reached a total of P1.3 billion.

Also last year, a total of $1.54 billion worth of goods were exported from 3032. The number of jobs generated: 3,854, with aggregate salaries and wages of P176.66-billion.

Ayala profit up

From page B1

that contributed by dropping contributions by 12 percent.

The office sector saw robust growth on rising demand from the business process outsourcing industry.

BPI posted a net income of P9 billion, 8 percent higher than year-ago level, with its revenue posting a 9 percent growth fueled by higher net interest and non-interest income. BPI's total consolidated assets rose to P1 billion in 2000, with deposits up 11 percent to P467 billion. Net loans expanded by 6 percent with both corporate and consumer loans posting growth.

BPI's NPL and loans ratio declined to 5.5 percent, which was below the industry average of 6.08 percent.

Globe closed the year with a consolidated net income of about P12 billion, 14 percent higher than year-ago level. Its wireless subscriber base grew 26 percent to 11.7 million at year end.

AC Capital contributed 20 percent of the group's equity earnings, with utility firm Manila Water and Integrated Microelectronics serving as the main growth drivers.

Manila Water posted a record net income of P2.6 billion, up 19 percent from the previous year.

Electronics subsidiary Integrated Microelectronics Inc. reported a net income of US$33 million, 28 percent higher than the previous year, with revenue reaching US$191 million.

Dud or alive

Conrado R. Bernal III

PALACE APOLOGISTS PART us to believe that, if the economy is still not better, we must thank this core administration of Gloria.

I see. Is that the reason why the latest bidding for Transco is another dud?

In the bidding last week, this is already Transco's seventeenth more than bidders have been online, remember?

When only the Citadel Strike group submitted an offer, the government corporate called PHALM that declared another failed bidding.

That is already failure No. 3, okay? This core administration sure seems to be addicted to failure. And they say it is doing great with the economy. Is that so?

News mind that Transco's privatization is the key to curbing power rates in this country. Only the 2nd highest in Asia! Imagine the electricity rebates program Ojeiva.

So much can already be said about this core administration's indecisiveness in carrying out the Epira, which is the law of the land.

Last week's failed bidding for Transco tells the whole world a lot about the lack of interest in this country for big-ticket investments.

Moreover, it also reinforces suspicion in business that the Malacañang Transco "marks" may be leaning towards another group for this mother of all privatizations.

Five years ago in 2000, as its first attempt at Transco privatization, this same group was aborted and failed to get a "negotiated" sale with a Singapore group.

Thus, the country should surely sink deeper into despondency on the Transco privatization—what with one failed bidding after another.

It's time for the "mafia" to cook the terms and conditions, making them just right for the taste of the "pre-chosen winner."

Come on, they do it everyday!

Question: Since this country needs to invest at least $1 billion on power transmission, how can we be certain that the mafia's favored group has the money?

And that's probably why the PCCI, or the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, calls for negotiation between Citadel Strike and Psalm on the sale of Transco.

Look, Citadel Strike doesn't have to do its most sophisticated bidding, prepared even by foreign financial advisers such as the House of Rothschild and Credit Suisse.

As the PCCI thinking goes, it is perhaps worthy for Psalm to assume that kind of lower income, if only to speed up privatization, which is already five years overdue.

If the negotiations fail, then Psalm can always go for another study by the Rosario Bidding Management for another bidding later only two years.

For five years, we have been trying to privatize Transco—a crucial step in cutting power rates here. But we still have nothing to show for it. Is this "mafia" having fun?

* * *

Between us girls, still ongoing is a strong lobby for the Palauo to set aside on the flip-flopping Philcomsat group of companies.

It actually involves the Bureau-to-Office Series, which is calling for the liquidation of the businesses...as in "right now," before their rank is gone for good.

And the lobby according to talk in business, already reached Malacañang itself.

As our point, the Illusorio-Africa group leads representation with the President. The supposedly wholesome move, built by, in the Palauo, right in front of the representation. He told the person on the other side of the line, and in harsh language, to get rid of some blood relations who were government investors in the Philcomsat group.

And true enough, nothing happened! Does anybody even listen to Chavit in anymore? Well, the blood relations are still in the Philcomsat group.

And, in the Senate hearing on the alleged "stealing" of government monies in the Philcomsat group, which may be another story for the media pressure on this core administration, volumes upon volumes of official records from the SEC, in fact, showed a lot of ... well, "stealing."

And so the Illusorio-Africa group wants the government to liquidate the businesses now, pay the proceeds in escrow, and then just wait for the settlement of the court cases.

That way, according the lobby with Elizabeth, the government can still get something before everything is stolen.

* * *

Actually, a similar approach in the case of San Miguel Corp., the country's largest private business, was in the works during the time of the late Enrile-Tesoro in the PCGG.

But listing the talks with Yuchengco was a big goes in one of the biggest business accounting firms in the country who wanted a "free" San Miguel.

At present, the government controls 40 percent of the company through the PCGG as sequestered shares, and the GSIS and Philcomsat.

And then San Miguel chair Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco is currently 20 percent.

Some major stockholders like Kerry Sy (SM group), Hiro Ikeo of Japan, the BMC Brothers from Cebu and Enrique Razon (whose Catholic church he example) account for another 28 percent of the shares.

Thus, the company has barely enough shares for the public or market-listed stock exchanges.

Now, the stock market has reserve life. This may be a good time for the government to do a secondary public offering of its 40 percent San Miguel shares.

Unlike the bidding held for the shares of PNB, this NOT bidding company), to which the blue goes to a single group, a public offering will spread out the shares to more people, thus widening ownership base, which is good for stock market trading.

The sense hereabs then applies. And just the proceeds in escrow until the final settlement of the cases.

Meanwhile, the biggest present business in the country becomes a real public company. I mean, why not?

Power rates on their way down in Davao

ELECTRICITY RATES IN DAVAO may fall by as much as 15.95 centavos per Kilowatt-hour (kWh), following the Energy Regulatory Corp.'s approval of an agreement between the Davao Light and Power Co. (DLPC) and the National Transmission Corp.

In a Jan. 31 order, the ERC approved a memorandum of agreement between DLPC and Transco, which is involved in purchasing "transfer power support" from SPC's Bajada Power Plant, subject to dispatch instructions from Transco's Mindanao System Operator.

Reactive power support refers to the ancillary service that is dispatched to the grid during power shortages such as low-voltage situations.

This helps maintain the proper voltage level or power quality in the affected grid. Under the DLPC-Transco agreement, this power supply can be sourced from the DLPC's Bajada Power Plant.

Under the agreement, the provision of reactive power support to the grid will be on a "non-firm basis," or with no fixed commitments, and just as the need arises.

"The [transaction agreed by DLPC will help lower rates when its Bajada Power Plant is operational, whenever reactive power support is required and the National Power Corp. [is not able to fully provide such ancillary service," said Rodolfo Albano Jr. of the plaintiff.

During such times, he said Transco would pay DLPC for the availment of the service. As a result of this transaction, DLPC could opt to give this additional income back to its customers by way of lower rates.

"DLPC customers can enjoy a potential rate reduction of 15.95 centavos per kWh, based on Transco's 2000 actual availment of reactive power support," Albano said.

"With the MOA between DLPC and Transco in place, the customers of DLPC will benefit in terms of lower rates and all the consumers in the Mindanao grid will be assured of a more stable and reliable power supply."

Also on Jan. 31, when it approved the DLPC-Transco agreement, the ERC also issued its final decision on DLPC's rates unbundling application.

Abigail L. Ho

More funds poured into coal-to-fuel plant

By Abigail L. Ho

AMERICAN VINE EXCAVATORS Inc. is infusing $6.6 million into a coal-to-fuels project, even though a recall warning by the Philippine government to decide on the counterpart funding for the same project that is expected to help ease the country's dependence on imported oil.

Antonio Ito, president of local development partner HMGB Corp., said Manchesterite chair and chief executive Gob Berman approved the investment just last Sunday.

The $6.6-million infusion would jumpstart the second phase of the three-phase project, which involved process engineering design of the preliminary front-end and engineering design (pre-FEED), technology demonstration and the construction of the Fischer-Tropsch Process Demonstration Unit (FT PDU), or a facility that turns coal into liquid fuels, Ito said.

The US Department of Energy and the Illinois Coal Competitiveness Program are also providing a $5.7-million grant to help finance the establishment of the pilot-scale FT PDU.

The facility which would be constructed at the Gas Technology Institute (GTI) in Des Plaines, Illinois, would also be partly funded by HMGB Corp., Ito said.

So far, Hinabaluan and HMGB had already invested $3.2 million in the project's first phase, or the pre-feasibility study stage.

Total investments for these major activities, Ito said, would reach close to $24.6-million.

"This will catapult the project towards timely completion of project development activities and, forthwith, bring the project to the market for financial closure," Ito said.

"Hinabaluan is also signing a technology license agreement with HMGB in mid-March. The same should for the pre-FEED contract and license agreement are undergoing final review."

The proposed coal liquefaction facility is expected to yield 44,200 barrels a day of ultra-clean fuels, including 11,500 barrels a day of liquefied petroleum gas.

Apart from gasoline, diesel and LPG, the facility was also going to use 67.2 megawatts (MW) of power on combined cycle from the steam that will be recovered from the liquefaction plant.

The 67.2-MW power can be channeled to the grid.

The proposed project will make the Philippines the fourth-most Asian hub for coal-to-liquids conversion, given its proximity to sources of suitable coal within the Philippines and around the region, as well as to coal-shipping routes.

"Significant is the fact that the project can effectively cut the country's dependence on imported oil by at least 20 percent, producing ultra-clean transportation fuels at 40 percent cheaper than imported petroleum products," Ito said.

"This saves valuable foreign exchange and, more than ever, is the cleanest and most solid infrastructure response to alternative energy development amid the recent increasing prices of imported oil," he added.

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LIFESTYLE

NO SUGAR. NO CARBS. 30g of WHEY PROTEIN
PIDE'N IN
The way to
Go to the GYM • Get a Diet • Get an Expert • Fix a Healthy Lifestyle

Labor of love

BUNDLES of fresh flowers go through inspection by US Customs and Border Protection agriculture specialists.

A BUD found in the flowers is placed in a glass tube for closer examination.

EVEN the insides of vases are not spared from airport marshalling to check for harmful bugs.

IT CERTAINLY ISN'T A FUNNY Valentine for United States Customs and Border Protection agriculture specialists when the Miami international airport in Florida becomes a bottleneck of roses this time of the year. Every day the week before Valentine's Day, almost 100,000 boxes of fresh flowers have to be checked for pests and diseases that could damage US agriculture crops. The airport handles 80 percent of all floral imports into the US, mostly from South America.

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Davao – Biagre's Coffee, Avenues
Cebu – Tourist's Haven Gift Shop, Aurum Jewelry, Holland Tulips and many more!
ang lakas mo sa Globe

THE FIVE-STAR Club Himalaya Resort in Nagarkot is located 7,200 ft above sea level

CENTURY OLD: watering hole inside the palace in Bhaktapur Durbar Square

ANOTHER square in Bhaktapur where locals sell pottery, herbs, brass items and wheat

Discovering my own Shangri-la

Part I

THE HINDU-BUDDHIST SWAYAMBHUnath Stupa, said to be 2,000 years old and the oldest in Nepal, is one of the most glorious Buddhist shrines I've ever seen. You'll be amazed at the paintings on the four sides of the spire's base—huge, glaring, all-seeing eyes of the Lord Buddha.

The temple is three kilometers away from Kathmandu and is on a hill overlooking Kathmandu valley thus giving us an awesome view of the capital.

The 2,500-year-old Bhaktapur Durbar (palace) Square, is also one of the World Heritage Sites listed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, it's a small city-like place. You enter through the Golden Gate, considered one of the most beautiful and intricately carved gates in the world.

The palace, built in 1427, has 55 windows of wood-and-stone with rich carvings.

Walking around you'll find many temples and examples of architectural splendor like National Art Gallery, National Woodworking Museum, and Stone and Bronze Museum.

The former hall at the entrance of the stone temple of Batsala Devi was sang to signal curfew in the 1700s.

ONE of the beautiful smaller temples in Swayambhunath, nicknamed the "Monkey Temple"

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcanjo

Photos by Alain Yan Hugon using Kodak EasyShare Z885

Shopper's delight

Shopping outside the palace grounds will drive you delirious with delight—pottery, brass, copper, Tibetan trinkets and jewelry, colorful beaded necklaces, eye-catching dyed fabrics, and antique reproductions.

Dinner at the Dwarika's Hotel's renowned Krishnarpan, a Nepalese restaurant, floored by the hotel's GM's, gave a glimpse of the old civilization and the exotic tradition of the Himalayas. Nine choices range from a six-course meal for US$22 to a 22-course dinner for $50[illegible]. Definitely a gastronomic experience for anyone, pahonggan.

After a quick lunch, we had the obligatory visit to Kathmandu Durbar square. Annexed near of wisely Kings of Nepal were crowned here. The square's 260 palaces and 50 temples showed us the deep religious and cultural life of the people.

We all looked forward to an overnight stay at the luxurious Club Himalaya Nagarkot Resort, en route per se far from the hustle and bustle of the city. Just an hour-and-a-half drive from Kathmandu and you'll be in the exquisite five-star resort, which is 7,200 ft above sea level.

Believe me, the scene-watching, taping down to the resort is well worth it, chitchap.

Mesmerizing

On the way up we stopped at another breathtaking World Heritage Site, the temple of Changu Narayan. We were mesmerized by the oldest temple in the valley, said to be almost 1,600 years old and situated on a hill, with a panoramic view of the beautiful green fields. On a clear day, you can see the peaks of the Himalayan Mountains.

The people's laid back lifestyle and the architectural fine houses will make any photographer happy. Children play, men sit together chatting, while women clean newly harvested corn.

The Nagarkot Resort is renowned for its panoramic view of the Himalayas. The beautiful Club Himalaya left an open[illegible]. Guests from around the world go there for the main purpose of watching daybreak with the 16 rainbows as backdrop.

To be able to wake up before 5 a.m. to see the spectacular sunrise had no making to bed early. Appointed to 6 a.m., we were all finished up against the cold as we stood at the huge terrace with other tourists, cameras ready to capture the fantastic sun.

As the sun rose in the horizon, the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas started to appear, and its colors changed gradually from a light pink to pale orange color. Finally, we got a view of the awesome Himalayas. From the peak of Mt. Annapurna to Mount Everest. It was picture perfect. Wow, an experience that will never be forgotten!

Casino Royal

After a healthy breakfast and still dazed by the size of a kind amenity, we went back to Kathmandu, and checked in at Hotel Yak & Yeti. The five-star deluxe oasis has a newly designed 18-storeyer was annexed to the 100-year-old palace to house Kathmandu's Casino Royal, which is open 24 hours.

When we arrived, the lobby was packed with tourists, most of them just coming back from trekking in different Himalayan peaks. No wonder Nepal is known as the ultimate destination for the trekking enthusiast, earning it the title "Trekkers Paradise."

Since it was our last day in Kathmandu, we dashed off to go shopping.

It's amazing how inexpensive things are in Nepal. There are tons of things to buy from gorgeous embroidered suede bags and wallets, to giant shells with sterling silver inlay, different kinds of colorful pashmina, tassels[illegible], all sorts of pen stones, gorgeous fabrics, plus a lot more. Incredible, chitchap!

Next morning we left with real heavy hearts aboard Royal Nepal Airlines for Hong Kong, staying overnight at a hotel in Causeland. The flight home on Philippine Airlines was smooth, much.

Yes, people, Nepal, a holiday hotspot acclaimed on the Himalayas, is intriguing and fascinating. The culture is so rich, the people genial and the country absolutely beautiful. It's no wonder that some people call it Shangri-La discovered.

PAL's "unforgettable" package to Nepal includes round-trip economy class airfare with a stop in Hong Kong or Bangkok, airport hotel transfer, three-night hotel accommodation, and daily buffet and tours.

For more info on this fantastic PAL-inexpensive package to exciting exotic destinations in Asia, call Philippine Airlines reservation at 855-8777 or check out philippineairlines.com. Also check the Royal Tourism Board's website, welcomenepal.com.

You'll never regret it. Addings

HOTEL Yak & Yeti's outer wing

INTRICATE Tibetan painting on the ceiling of Bhaktapur Temple

GORGEOUS Himalayan sunrise

MYSTIQUE at the Bhaktapur Durbar Square in the tallest temple in Nepal

GARLANDS of flowers are sold at the square.

WELCOMING a new day at the Club Himalaya Resort

A HIMOKI gets cool tea!

DINNER at Kathmandu's renowned Bhojan Griha, one of the finest Nepali restaurants, on the last day of our visit, hosted by Shiva Travel's managing director Arjun Sharma (second from right)

NATURAL colors to "dye" for

HELPFUL Philippine Airlines cruise purser Erwin Holgueno, flight attendant Sandra Santos, flight trainer Ana Zuniga, and flight attendants Rose Narvaez and Lisa Santos

NEPAL Tourism Board director Nandini Lata Thapa with media consultant Sajad Pradhan, not here

TOURISM promotions officer Shradha Shrestha

OPEN market outside the palace in Kathmandu Durbar Square, where the kings of Nepal are crowned

Autism rate higher in US, about 1:150

Research gives the clearest picture yet of how common the problem is in some parts of the country

ATLANTA—ABOUT ONE IN 150 AMERICAN children has autism, making it an urgent public health concern, said US health officials Thursday who reported on the largest study done so far on the troubling disorder.

The new numbers, based on 2002 data from 14 states, are higher than previously reported.

Advocates said the study provides a sad new understanding of how common autism is and should fuel efforts to get the government to spend hundreds of millions of additional dollars for autism research and services.

"This data today shows us we're going to need more early intervention services and more therapies, and we're going to need federal and state legislators to stand up for these families," said Alison Singer, spokeswoman for Autism Speaks, the nation's largest organization advocating more services for autistic children.

The study by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention calculated an average autism rate of 6.6 per 1,000. That compares with last year's estimated rate of 3.3 per 1,000.

The research involved an intense review of medical and school records for children in all or part of 14 states and gives the clearest picture yet of how common autism is in some parts of the country, CDC officials said.

However, those states are not demographically representative of the nation as a whole, so officials cautioned against using the results as a national average. The study does not include some of the most populous states like California, Texas and Florida.

Also, the study does not answer whether autism is increasing—a controversial topic, driven in part by the conviction by some parents and advocates that autism is linked to a vaccine preservative. The best scientific studies have not borne out that claim.

"We can't make conclusions about trends yet," because the study's database is too new, said Catherine Rice, a CDC behavioral scientist who was the study's lead author.

Autism is a complex disorder usually not diagnosed in children until after age 3. It is characterized by a range of behaviors, including difficulty in expressing needs and inability to socialize. The cause is not known.

Cause still unknown

Scientists have been working here common they think the disorder is. Best estimates from smaller studies have ranged from 1 out of every 10,000 children to nearly 1 in 100.

Last year's estimate of 3.3 out of every 1,000 US children was based on national surveys of tens of thousands of families with school-age children. That fit into a prevalence range found in other recent studies.

The CDC also has been developing an alternate way of measuring autism prevalence, building a network of university and state health departments for ongoing surveillance of autism and developmental disabilities. The study released Thursday is one of the first scientific papers to come out of that effort.

"This is a more accurate rate because of the methods they used," said Dr. Eric Hollander, an autism expert at New York's Mount Sinai School of Medicine.

The study involved 2002 data from parts or all of 14 states—Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Maryland, Missouri, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Utah, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

Researchers looked specifically at children who were 8 years old that year. They said most children with autism are identified for enrollment in educational services by that age.

The researchers checked health records in each area and school records when they were made available, looking for children who met diagnostic criteria for autism. They used those numbers to calculate a prevalence rate for each study area.

The rates varied from 3.3 per 1,000 in the study site in Alabama, which was made up of the state's 32 northernmost counties, to 10.6 in the site in New Jersey, which involved four counties, including metropolitan Newark.

Researchers say they do not know why the rate was so high in New Jersey. They think the difference may stem in part from parts because researchers had limited access to special education records there.

AP

The 'complete food' as disease fighter

By Yuga Bago-Reyes

MILK IS SAID TO BE the complete food, especially for children.

Health advocates believe it can be made even better by fortifying it with micro-nutrients like zinc, selenium and iron.

A recent international study published in the British Medical Journal (BMJ Journal) has fortified milk powder prevented major childhood diseases, particularly diarrhea and pneumonia.

World Health Organization statistics show diarrhea is a leading cause of sickness and death among young children. Loss of nutrients from diarrhea can make children weak and malnourished, stunting their physical growth and lowering resistance to diseases.

Acute severe respiratory infection (ASRI), including pneumonia, is another leading cause of sickness and deaths in young children.

Global figures show diarrhea causes 16 percent of the annual 10.6 million deaths of children less than five years, while pneumonia accounts for 18 percent of these deaths.

CHILD nutrition expert Dr. Sunil Sazawal and Anchor nutritionist manager Rebecca Cannon

India-based study

Dr. Sunil Sazawal, who conducted the study in India (quoted by the BMJ), said the findings would help in assessing child health globally. Sazawal is an expert on child nutrition and associate research professor at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, United States.

"The study is intended to answer the question of the health impact of using milk to deliver certain micro-nutrients," said Sazawal, a recent Manila visitor.

The study involved 623 children aged 1-3 years-old from a section of New Delhi, India's capital. The kids were divided into two groups: one group receiving fortified milk powder, the other non-fortified.

The group that received fortified milk around twice protected against diarrhea and respiratory illness than the other group.

Aside from needing less antibiotics, children who consumed fortified milk were also found to be better protected against acute respiratory illness, severe fever-and-other illnesses.

"The milk was given on a daily basis for a period of one year," Sazawal said. "Parents didn't have any idea what (kind of milk) their kids were getting. Essentially, we found a significant reduction in diarrhea and pneumonia cases among children under age 5."

All children in the study received the same amount of energy, protein, carbohydrates and fat from the two types of milk. Children also received other foods. This suggested to the researcher that the benefits of fortified milk could be expected even moderately well-fed children.

Fortification works

"The research underlines the goodness of dairy and shows that, by fortifying a staple food like milk, we can ultimately assist in the prevention of serious illnesses," Sazawal said.

"The research was supported by Nestle, maker of Anchor 1+ with Nutri-Gain, which is fortified with vitamins A, C, E and the minerals iron, zinc and selenium. Developed in New Zealand, the milk powders are sold in Asia and the Middle East.

"The study was part of Nestle's efforts to formulate nutritious dairy products through its Anchor Institute, which supports independent research to set benchmarks for products aimed at promoting child health and nutrition.

"Milk is a very nutritious food on its own," said Rebecca Cannon, nutrition manager for Anchor Institute. "It has calcium, protein, Vitamins A, D and C. But it still does not contain all the nutrients needed to protect kids from common illnesses.

Cannon said, "It's quite difficult to get all the nutrients we need... That's the advantage of fortified milk. It contains all the nutrients our body needs."

Anchor 1+ for kids aged 1-3 has been in the market since 2005. It was reformulated and further improved based on the results of the study. Anchor, marketed in Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan as Promise, is sold in over 65 countries worldwide. Its range of products includes milk (liquid and powder), butter, cheese and yoghurt.

Sazawal's paper can be viewed at www.bmj.com

FONTERRA'S Anchor 1+ is fortified with vitamins A, C, E and minerals.

Where there is fire

By Anne R. Jardeleza

WOMAN, VANITY IS thy name, once wrote The Bard. Just how far would you push yourself to pursue a svelte bod? Would you go under fire?

There is a new treatment in town called the Meridian Fire Therapy. It is grounded on one of the basic traditional Chinese medicinal theories relating to the composition and evolution of the physical universe. The power behind all transformation within the mind, body and spirit is fueled by fire.

"Fire promotes heat," said Glizel E. Gubitz, operations manager of the Bio-Micro Day Spa, where the fire therapy is offered exclusively for now. "Heat, combined with the right traditional Chinese herbs and essences, aids in melting away acid buildup, toxins and fatty deposits."

Water is important in detoxifying the body, but for toxins to move out, the heat element is essential. Blood flow increases as heated areas. When there is an increased blood flow, there is an increased supply of nutrients and removal of toxins.

Age-old procedure

According Galeno, the treatment, supposedly adopted from age-old Tibetan traditions, is also effective in providing remedy to ailments such as arthritis, rheumatism, sciatica, back pains, and even mood impotence in men and lethal loathsome women.

The rather radical procedure, although unintrusive and nonsurgical, is not really that complicated.

When a specific body part has been pretreated with hot towel, the therapist begins to massage through thumb and knuckle press using the Bio-Essence and Super Cosmetic Cream. A Condition Spray is applied to relax the area before it's all set for the real deal.

Dry, damp and wet towels are layered. A formulation of 95 percent alcohol is applied on the outer wet towel before the therapist rubs on a torch lighter and sets the towel on fire. After a minimum of five exposures to the fire...each lasting about 10 seconds, depending on tolerance—the area is once again massaged. In 30 minutes, the treatment is over.

There are two fire therapy procedures: the Meridian Therapy Massage, a treatment to body silhouette, and Body Slimming. Both areas costs P2,200 per treatment.

"Many spas offer whole-body massage. The Meridian Fire Therapy is a treatment for specific areas of the body," Gubitz said.

Safety

Since it involves a very volatile element, safety precautions are taken to ensure the safety of the client and the therapists. Treatment rooms maintain good air circulation with absolutely no smoking, alcohol in sight that might catch fire.

The therapist and his/her assistant must have no traces of alcohol in their hands. Alcohol must never spill outside the wet towel area. A bucket of water is nearby in case of emergency.

"In our experience, there has never been an accident, not even a minor injury," she said.

It is important, too, that clients understand the varying heat levels they will go through during the treatment. Medical history, allergies, stress level tolerance, etc., are gathered during consultation prior to treatment schedule.

The traditional Chinese need time applied during massage depends on the kind of treatment a client seeks. Oil removers and creams will vary for instance, for people with arthritis as those who want to be rid of thick fat deposits.

Among the herbal ingredient profile are cassiae semen, a natural-acting laxative for chronic constipation; dried orange peel or aiyangliuwa for spleen, salvia root to promote vaginal circulation. Chinese caterpillar fungus to treat impotence, hairtail tadfa to cure blood-lung.

Galeno said the application of the projade (the herbs in powder deep into the skin and directly deliver to the targeted tissues for desired effect.

Galeno, however, warned the treatment is limited when she trained to Hong Kong last year, said a solid discomfort would usually be experienced at the start of the treatment but would disappear after a few seconds. And, no, the skin would not burn; it would turn red but not tender.

The procedure, she added, is so safe that it can be performed on a daily basis.

A chronic back pain that had plagued her for a year disappeared after one treatment, she said, and she lost an inch on her waistline.

And if even the slide to keep the extra inch off her waist? Um, she couldn't tell for sure, she admitted. To maintain the new figure, she said, the good old-fashioned balanced diet and regular exercise still do the trick. But effects can't follow the golden rule, she said. 10 consecutive days of treatment assures a permanent inch loss.

The Bio-Micro Day Spa has branches in Alabang, Makati, Greenhills and Mother Ignacia, QC.

HELPING HOT Burn fat the easy way. Glizel E. Gubitz, above, says fire therapy is effective in melting away stubborn fat deposits from "problem" areas in the body, such as the belly, legs and arms. The woman, at left, who was measured before and after the treatment, lost two inches off her waistline after a single session. ALEXIS ORTEGA (2)

INNER AWARENESS
Jaime Licauco

Is there a connection between food and spirituality?

HERE'S AN INTERESTING QUESTION from reader John Mercier on the connection between the kind we eat, psychic ability and spirituality.

"I read in your book The Powers of Your Inner Mind that when one abstained from eating certain foods, one could improve his psychic ability. Is

"That makes me wonder if there is a direct link between diet and deep spirituality. If so, does it make the practice of vegetarianism by Buddhists the correct path to spirituality?

"Is it then correct to hypothesize that one can more easily get what he is seeking for if he abstains from certain foods? And also from such excessive things as watching too much television? Will this (vegetarianism) do wonders if coupled with meditation?

"I am one of your many readers and I really appreciate the knowledge that you are opening for us."

No universal answer

You have asked a question for which there is no universal agreement. Some people claim it does not matter what you eat as long as you are consistent in your practice.

However, many spiritual teachers and mystics all over the world believe that there is a direct connection between spirituality, psychic powers and the food we eat. This is what I believe, too.

Why are vegetarianism and abstaining from eating meat conducive to spiritual growth and psychic ability?

First, our physical structures and physiological processes are not meant for meat. Meat-eating animals have sharp fangs to tear meat. They salivate heavily in preparation the meat before it even reaches the stomach. They have short colons so the meat they eat gets out of their body in a relatively short time.

Meat easily rots and must be eliminated quickly, otherwise it becomes toxic.

Vegetables and fruit-eating animals do not have fangs. They do not salivate heavily when eating and they have long colons. Fruits and vegetables do not rot or become toxic as in fast as animal meat.

One thing more, when an animal is butchered or killed, it releases toxins that get absorbed by humans when they eat the meat. Even if modern slaughtering processes to kill, however, to make the killing of animals painless, they are still aware they will be killed and they release toxins.

We are what we eat. If we eat animal meat, don't we literally and in reality make that animal part of us?

Almost all religions of the world advocate a more vegetarian diet. Although the Christian religion allows the eating of lamb and, I think, chicken, it does ask us to avoid certain animal meats they consider to be unclean.

The Muslims do not eat pork. The Hindus and Buddhists completely avoid eating animal meat.

You will note that societies that avoid eating meat are also highly spiritual, while those that eat meat are the most materialistic in the world. I do not say we must become like societies whose populations are mainly meat eaters and those that are vegetarians.

Among all the established religions in the world, the Buddhists are the most peace loving and they are vegetarians. Actually, no religion is vegetarianism violence. But followers are sometimes driven to extremes.

Even Christianity whose founder, Jesus, was peace-loving, has had a long history of violence and cruelty.

A vegetarian diet to me has no use only to a peaceful and quiet mind, but also to spiritual growth and understanding.

Cards for reading

Here's a question on the use of cards for psychic reading from Edward when attended my seminar on ESP in Clark Field, Pampanga, last year.

"Lately I tried using playing cards for psychic reading and the [subjects] of the readings were amazed. They told me everything I said about me was true. I just want to ask if there is anything wrong or negative in using cards for reading."

I don't see anything wrong or negative in using cards for psychic reading. There are merely tools to access information from our subconscious minds and they have no power on their own. Same are crystal balls, tea leaves, chicken egg and other materials for psychic readings.

As long as your intentions are good and noble, I see nothing wrong in using media for psychic readings.

Pleasures of tea

THE ANCIENT Art of calligraphy uses fluid hand movements that require sure focus.

A TEA-LEAF reading can lead to wonderful discoveries.

TAI CHI requires a focused mind and hand-and-body coordination.

DRENCHED WITH VITAMIN C, Earth's Sky Green tool Tea is a refreshing alternative to all the sodas and carbonated drinks available everywhere. It relieves the tension-stocking and calming benefits of real tea.

Made with natural ingredients, and containing 300 percent of the Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) of Vitamin C, Earth's Sky Lemon tool Tea and Earth's Sky Green tool Tea are brewed from the finest tea leaves and infused with all-natural lemon flavor.

The taste is just what you should taste...pure tea flavor, not sour or too bitter but just right.

Earth's Sky Lemon tool Tea and Earth's Sky Green tool Tea come in 45-g and 500-g packs and are available in leading supermarkets, groceries, convenience stores and restaurants. For the calorie-conscious, there's also the Earth's Sky Lemon tool Tea low-calorie version so you can have the great taste without the extra weight.

Free glucose meters

GLUCERNA SR IS GIVING away up to 100 glucose meters to help diabetics monitor their blood sugar levels.

Under its special promotion Lose SR: Take Control, Take Glucerna SR, consumers will get a free Optium glucose meter with every purchase of 12 900-g cans of Glucerna SR to single or accumulated purchases until March 31.

Glizel E. Ferrer, Glucerna SR product manager, said that aside from the free glucose meter, loyal consumers will also get one box of glucose strips as their 12th purchase of Glucerna SR 900-g cans. For more cans as much as 96,000 with the free offers.

Glucerna SR has a unique Spaced Release (SR) energy system that allows the body to absorb sugar slowly to minimize after-meal sugar level surges. It provides sustained release of energy throughout the day.

Glucerna SR also contains high levels of micronutrients and fiber, aside from the help lower blood cholesterol and promotes a healthier heart. Its nutrient-dense and low-calorie formula is designed for better weight management. The formula comes in vanilla and chocolate flavors.

Glucerna SR free glucose meter promo is available in all Mercury Drug outlets and Home Delivery nationwide through Med Express Drugstore at 8565333 and All Saints Med at 9102881.

Call 6899444 or the toll-free hotline 1-800-1063-0327. Trained health professionals answer (8:8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday-Friday).

GLUCERNA SR

Heart center holds review course

THE PHILIPPINE HEART CENTER (PHC) will hold a first-of-its-kind medical symposium as part of its 2007 Centenary Avery Dennison (CME) Review Course 9th: 23-26.

With the theme "Emerging Concepts, Shifting Practices," medical symposium head Dr. Gilbert C. Mirla said the review course would aim to identify what standard have to practices by reviewing treatment options and clinical results.

Mirla said many physicians had not been updated on the management of cardiovascular (like hypertension or high blood pressure) and metabolic (like diabetes) diseases.

Through the symposium, PHC will focus on even-aging old events now standards in managing CAD, with emphasis on what really works.

Coronary artery disease occurs when the arteries supplying blood to the heart muscle (coronary arteries) harden and become narrow, leading to obstructing blood and oxygen flow to the heart. This results in angina, heart attack, heart failure, or arrhythmias (irregular heart rhythm). CAD is the most common type of heart disease and is the leading cause of death in both men and women in the United States. Call 891-7-5900 ext.

CLIP & SAVE

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Prone overhead lift

THIS EXERCISE strengthens the muscles in the back of your shoulders, as well as your middle and lower back. Strong muscles in these areas improve your posture and can help relieve aches and pains associated with sitting at a desk for long periods.

Equipment:
Stability ball or gym bench
Dumbbells (or optional).

Exercise technique:

1. Lie face down on a stability ball with your legs apart. Your head and shoulders will be off the edge and your arms hanging down.

2. Squeeze your shoulder blades together and raise your arms with the palms together to shoulder level.

3. Hold the position for one or two seconds.

4. Slowly lower the arms.

Performance tips:

1. Since these muscles tend to be weak in most people, don't use dumbbells until you are stronger.

2. Make sure your head stays in line with your spine. Avoid bending your head down or looking up.

3. If you need help with balance, stabilize by putting your feet against a wall.

4. Exhale when you lift the arms. Inhale when you bring them down.

Repetitions:
12-15 repetitions

WELL AND GOOD
Tina Jaen

Wellness is a state of mind

ATTITUDES LIKE "I'M TOO OLD to exercise," "Why should I exercise when I don't need to lose weight" or "I'll just take a diet pill" are mental obstacles to keeping fit and maintaining a healthy weight.

Here are the attitudes I wish people have about fitness so they can improve the quality of their lives.

Vital

Looking the best you can is a pleasant side effect but it isn't the most important reason you should exercise. Exercise is a vital part of being healthy. You cannot do without it if you want your body to be in tip-top shape.

Long ago, there was no need to make a conscious effort to exercise because strenuous physical activity was part of daily life. Today we live under abnormal conditions.

Our bodies are made for hard physical labor and, in fact, thrive on vigorous activity, and yet our lifestyles don't demand anything more taxing than moving a computer mouse or sending a text message.

As a result, our bodies deteriorate permanently as we grow old, and we fall prey to lifestyle ailments like heart disease, diabetes and hypertension.

Reverence

Someone once said, "Exercise is spiritual but reverence is essential." Exercise doesn't have to mean going to the gym. It can also mean dancing, doing martial arts or sports, housecleaning and gardening.

Keeping physically active is what is important. Walk wherever you can. Use the stairs instead of the elevator. Purposely be "inefficient" by taking the longer route to your usual destinations.

Enjoy

Choosing a workout you enjoy is powerful motivating to exercise for the rest of your life. But you should also hone the right attitude. The people who are the most consistent exercisers are those who think of their workouts as a pleasurable reward for their bodies. Even if you enjoy your workout, if you believe exercise is punishment for eating too much or being overweight, you will not be truly committed.

Young and old

Exercise isn't just for the young. In fact, the older one gets, the more important it is to exercise. And as a friend-now-an-doesn't-need much maintenance, the ill-effects of not enough physical activity are not obvious when you are in your teens and 20s.

The older you are, just like an old car, the more you need regular tune-ups. Unfortunately, unlike a car, there are no spare parts for your body that you can easily buy at your local car shop. All the more reason to exercise to keep your body in good running order.

For every 'body'

Everybody needs to be physically active. That includes people who are naturally thin. Research shows that slim, unfit people are more likely to die of all causes than overweight but fit people.

Exercise is not just for healthy or able-bodied people. Even if I lost both my legs tomorrow in a car accident, I would not stop working out because there are exercises to keep what would remain of my body in excellent shape.

Being physically handicapped doesn't mean that exercise is not relevant. Under those conditions, it becomes an even greater priority.

The same goes for people with special health conditions like diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, arthritis, etc. You are even expected to do the same exercises as athletes or people without your problems. But there are definitely exercises that are appropriate and beneficial.

Discipline

I once saw an ad for a fitness center that said, "The dictionary is the only book where success comes before work." I would be a liar if I told you that there was such a thing as instant fitness or instant fat loss.

The truth is that discipline, self-control and consistency are the keys to success. This is true not only for fitness but also for everything else in life.

We can win the lotto consecrose and have instant wealth but there is no guarantee you will be able to keep it unless you have the discipline and self-control to invest it wisely.

The truth is painful but if you accept it, it will set you free to be fit and slim. I use a slim "small" but whatever is healthy for your height and build) for the rest of your life.

Body appreciation

I feel so sad when I hear people say negative things about their bodies. It used to be mostly women who would say these terrible things but now I hear more men indulge in negative "body talk," too. Not content with that, people also say negative things about other people's bodies.

Words are powerful. How can you encourage yourself to stick to your exercise program if you are constantly criticizing your body shape, size or fitness level?

Love and appreciate your body by saying kind things to it. Focus on the positive changes your body gets through what you exercise. Do not deny the negative aspects of your body but do not get obsessed about them either. Your body is a gift from God. Treat it with the respect it deserves.

The Art of Living will host a workshop on Breathing to Relieve Stress and Anxiety March 3, 8:30 a.m. *Mornings* to noon). Fee: ₱500 (Elder & Senior citizen AGE = Seniors ½ Moneg)

Visit www.timjaenfitness.info

Tips for staying happy in 2007

"LIVE A HAPPY LIFE" IN 2007 IS the message of the first issue of Healthy Options Newsdigest (January/February 2007).

Starting with the cover story "The Good Life," the publication suggests six prescriptions to happiness, a primary goal of people.

Healthy Options Newsdigest stresses that happiness depends on both external and internal factors. It suggests "Happiness Enhancers" and answers "Frequently Asked Questions."

For the New Year, check out the "10 slim-down strategies you can control on." Dr. William Davis of the Center for Disease Control says, "If you can count it, you can change it."

The special report on "Do you have sugar illness?" gives readers tips on self-control. In "Sugar Blues: A Quick Experiment," it is suggested that the first step toward overcoming the problem is recognizing it and knowing that something must be done about it.

The mail-order section reminds readers to "Engage Your Brain." From lifelong learning to podcasts to Sudoku, it is raising awareness products, stimulate an learning more about how to keep the brain sharp.

Women's health is tackled in "Menopause—The Rite of Passage." Discussed are the stages of menopause and its physical and emotional symptoms.

Other stories are the "Powerful Benefits of Soy," "Glucosamine & Chondroitin Sulfate: Natural Remedy for Arthritis," "Calculating the Sterile Period," "Born to Lead, Learn to Laugh!"

The Healthy Options Newsdigest is free to customers of Healthy Options at 1/L, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong, Rustan's Supermarket, Greenhills; 2/L, Festival Supermall, Alabang; G/L, Ayala Center, Cebu City; LG/F, SM City North Edsa; 2/L, SM City Manila; Greenbelt, Ayala Center, Makati; 2/L, SM Megamall B, Edsa, Mandaluyong; SM Pampanga; SM Fairview; SM Mall of Asia and SM Clark; website www.healthyoptions.com.ph.

HEALTHY Options Newsdigest welcomes 2007 with tips on **"Living a Happy Life," "10 Slim-down Strategies"** and more. The cover story of the latest issue of Healthy Options Lifestyle Newsdigest is **"The Good Life."**

Love your heart

BE KIND TO YOUR HEART this month and every month of the year.

Have a healthy heart diet by drinking milk every day like Nestlé Fit-n'Trim, a specially formulated adult milk drink to help you keep the heart healthier and protected against cardiovascular diseases.

Nestlé Fit-n'Trim, a nonfat plant sterol extracted from soya beans that has been found in clinical tests to help lower bad cholesterol, thus reducing the risk of getting heart problems.

A nutritious diet can help keep the arteries clear and decrease the risk of developing heart-related illnesses. It advises to milk, eat more fruits, vegetables and carbohydrate-rich foods like rice, pasta, breads, and grains. Choose lean cuts of meat and eat fish and skinless chicken instead of beef.

Drink low-calorie beverages and antioxidant rich foods like tea, juices, soft drinks like tea, juices, soft drinks like tea, juices, soft drinks

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

The love-yourself Valentine checklist

"Every emotion is a message from your soul."—*Gary Zukav*

CONSIDER YOURSELF TEDDY. GO through your day to-day life. Take an assessment of your actions and habits. Ask these questions to all that you do.

Do I do this for myself or feel better? To survive, to feel safe, to feel more secure about myself?

For every yes, ask yourself: "Could I be motivated to do something for a higher purpose?" Authentic purpose means authentic power, which is human superhero minus the limitation of fear.

Intention

Beginning today, clarify your intentions. Focus on your internal landscape. Know that your external world is a reflection of your internal world. Therefore, what you intend, you will attract. What you speak, will happen. Whatever you imagine will become.

Power affirmations:

"I am all that I can be."

"I am one with my heart."

Creation

Connect your intention to creation. Remake, redo, reinvent yourself. It's never too late. Uncommon.

- Take charge of your body and mind. Do not blame your chemical imbalanced wife, boss, lover for your woes of health and heart. Accept responsibility. Take over now.

affirmation: "I am in charge of myself."

Nada.

Sudeh—Analyze your diet. If it is unhealthy, start adopting healthier choices/practices.

Exercise—Manage your stress by taking challenging-but-fun calmly.

Wealth—If you have a deficit or are found wanting, seek more prosperous paths. It's never too late to switch jobs, start a business based on your true desires. Be unafraid to try something new. Be bold. Be brave. Do a job that is closer to who you are.

affirm: "Wealth and success are mine now."

Love—Whatever relationship you are in, is not should be at this time in your life. Whatever love that comes should strengthen you with the knowledge that you are loved. Accept the love with grace and thanks, giving and without putting judgment. Love is a gift, no matter how you look at it.

But above all, love yourself enough to give yourself the best. Start practicing kindness to yourself by being less critical, demanding, angry with yourself.

affirm: "I love myself."

Celebration

Celebrate life. Each day is a gift. And every day is an opportunity to say "thank you." Practice giving thanks because the universe blesses a grateful heart.

The more you say thanks, the more the blessings come.

affirm: "I celebrate life today."

Loving practices to do:

- Take a long deserved rest from the chores you have done to your body. Cleanse and detoxify. Include coconut water and vegetable juices in your daily regimen.
- Pamper yourself. Treat yourself to something you feel is long deserved.
- Steal yourself positive thoughts and feelings. When a negative thought enters your mind, stop yourself. Remember the good times, not the bad. Review the positive feelings, not the negative.

'The Guest House'

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.
Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently empty your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.
The dark thought, the shame, the
malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.
Be grateful for whatever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.
—*Rumi*

Love and light!

Reference: "Hours of the Soul" by Gary Zukav

MEDICard, The Healthcare I Deserve!

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ENTERTAINMENT

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MARK BURNETT

Reality, the movie

Mark Burnett, creator of 'Survivor' and the upcoming 'On the Lot,' says, 'Good TV is good TV'–and that's just that

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

MARK BURNETT, WHO PIONEERED [illegible] of reality shows like "Survivor," "Rock Star: INXS/Supernova" and "The Contender," is eyeing the movies.

In a new genre in the works...reality movie?

Burnett is teaming up with Oscar-winning filmmaker Steven Spielberg in creating and working as executive producers for "On the Lot"—a reality competition in which 16 aspiring directors vie for a $1 million development deal at DreamWorks.

This is Burnett's second collaboration with DreamWorks—the first was the reality boxing competition "The Contender."

A lot of buzz surrounds the new Boston-DreamWorks project—especially since the Spielberg name is attached to it.

But Burnett refutes: "When we started working on this show, Steven told me: 'I've spent my whole career finding fantastic young talent ... The talent is out there. And we are giving them an opportunity [on this show]."

As expected, the show's seminar has been swamped with applicants.

"Over a two-day period, we received 1,000 entries," Burnett recounts.

Now, Burnett is wooing Asian filmmakers to send in their works via the Net. "Deadline for application is Feb. 26. They can upload their films on our Web site: onthelot.com," encouraged.

The TV hotshot is going his usual exploring new media—his latest project, "Gold Rush," is in partnership with AOL.

After television and the Internet, he is indeed serving his sights on the movie industry.

One thing he won't touch is a reality show based on his wars life.

"That would be a horrifying ... foolish thought," Burnett quips.

What kind of filmmaker do you wish to discover on the show? Reality shows tend to favor flashy personalities because self-effacing people generally don't make good TV.

Finding talent is the priority. And, on this show, we have an opportunity to find your talent. Although only one person wins and gets to work with Steven Spielberg, the other finalists can also get discovered. In fact, part of the arrangement is that we have the option to work with many of them.

I believe that the world will inherit the earth. Even if they are not spoken for as long as they are talented, they'll be highly regarded.

On "Survivor" you kinda need to be everything: mountaineer. But if you're a filmmaker, at least 50 percent of what you're saying is in the script.

How will Hollywood celebrities participate, as actors (in the movies, or as judges, or as both)?

I think we'll see some participation, both as judges and as weekly guests. Major studios will see this as a great way to promote their movies.

What makes it different from Matt Damon and Ben Affleck's "Project Greenlight"?

It's very different. "Project Greenlight" followed a single director through the process of

REALITY 2C

Lino speaks up on relationship with KC

"WHEN HE POSTED THE SNAPSHOT OF KC Concepcion and Lino Cayetano (taken in Hilary Hong Kong) in this space, I assure you: maliw. Maggie's hair bonnie and Brook are both so wholesome. Their families should not worry that a simple picture will make people jump to crazy conclusions about what they were doing in the Crown Colony together.

Just like many dating couples, they were just having good, clean fun. Mommy Meg has said her piece on TV that cannot overemphasize the fact that KC and Lino did not spend a week in Hong Kong. Regardless how many weeks, days, hours or minutes they were together, the point is

DOLLY WOOD
Dolly Anne Carvajal

they made time for each other. So much love, so little time! It's immeasurable when your heart is in it.

Lino finally speaks up now. His text message: "I just want to clear up some things regarding your

LINO CAYETANO

February Celebration at Araneta Center

WE HAVE MORE THAN JUST THE BIGGEST STARS IN THE MOST ROMANTIC CELEBRATION OF LOVE IN THE CHINESE NEW YEAR

AT THE COLISEUM

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CLIFF RICHARD
YEAR, AND NOW TOUR 2007
ARANETA COLISEUM

FEBRUARY 14 (WED) 8PM
PAUL WILLIAMS & DENNIS LAMBERT
THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGWRITERS' SERIES
ARANETA COLISEUM

FEBRUARY 15 (THU) 8PM
THRILLS OF SPRING
GRAND ACROBATIC SHOW
ARANETA COLISEUM

FEBRUARY 24 (SAT) 8PM
VINA MORALES
SHOWGIRL: THE ROYAL
ARANETA COLISEUM

AT THE MALLS

FEBRUARY 13 TO 19
SPRING FILM FESTIVAL 2007
GATEWAY CINEPLEX 10

FEBRUARY 16 TO 25
CHINESE BAZAAR
LEVEL 2, GATEWAY MALL
+ KUNG HEI FOR CASH
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Lino speaks up on relationship . . .

CESAR MONTANO

PAULEEN LUNA

PIOLO PASCUAL

When Erik met Bela

CESAR Montano and Pauleen Luna

Rama & Juliet

CESAR Montano

'Babe'

New image model

PIOLO Pascual

Cameron Diaz Kate Winslet Jude Law Jack Black

the Holiday

GARFIELD BY JIM DAVIS

A. LUPIN BY JOSE ABRIEN

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

PUGAD BABOY BY ROB. JUNIOR

PEPPER BY PATRICK MCDONNELL

LOVEPANGS BY ELIZABETH CHONGLO

ATOMIC ANDY/WEEGY BY LYNN GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PAPALUKAS

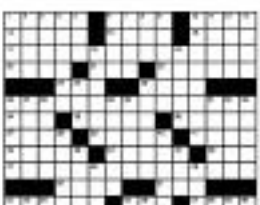
KBOO MACHINE BY RANDY ABRIEN

MAGKAKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Doug Peterson
Pasadena, CA

HOROSCOPE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

7				3				8
	9	5	2			7	4	
		1			8	2		
		3					1	
2								4
	5					3		
		2	4			9		
	7	6			3	8	5	
3				6				2

Difficulty Level ★★

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

5	8	7	4	6	2	1	3	9
3	6	4	8	9	5	7	1	2
9	2	1	3	7	1	5	8	4
6	7	3	5	2	4	8	9	1
4	1	5	6	8	9	2	4	3
8	9	2	1	5	7	3	4	6
7	4	6	9	1	3	4	2	5
1	5	9	2	4	8	6	7	8
2	3	8	7	3	6	9	5	1

Reality, the movie

Front page 04

making a film. It was less of a competition and more of a documentary in its execution.

Here, our hour is cross between "American Idol" and "The Apprentice," and a little bit of "Project Greenlight."

Ours is a different show. This is about [giving] opportunities to people who seem to be filmmakers or who are filmmakers but want to be discovered.

What is your target audience?

It's very general. "Survivor," for example, attracts a very wide audience: kids, parents, grandparents. In the US, "Survivor" averages 18 to 19 million people every week. This is another family show, so I think it has a pretty wide audience.

How can you ensure that the best filmmaker will emerge through public voting? The most popular is not necessarily the best.

The word "best" is totally subjective. I mean, it's the same thing on "American Idol" every year. We don't really know if the best singer will win.

But in the end, there are two things that matter in the movie industry: the critics and the box office. With the voting, we're mostly getting a winner based on box office.

[Edit:] I think you made a good point. It doesn't necessarily mean he or she's the "best," but we will define the winner based on box office and public opinion.

Where is the reality-show genre headed? What is its future? Is the innovation point diminished?

[To be fair,] we can also ask: What is the future of comedy? Drama? Are they dead? Truth is, all over the world, casework's [inexpensive] of a mixture of news, sports, drama, comedy, reality. It has been proven in the US that not one genre can dominate [the scene].

I suspect that by the end of the hour TV season [in the US], four or five of the Top Ten shows will again be reality. But it's all about quality. In the end, good TV is good TV. A good film is a good film. That's the real answer.

Over 84 million people watched the Super Bowl. Over 38 million people watched "American Idol." So the audiences are there, but they are only showing up for what they consider to be good.

What are the TV shows that you enjoy watching?

Apart from my own shows, I really enjoy "Americas Next Top Model" and "60 Minutes." Also, "Ugly Betty" and "Grey's Anatomy." Obviously, I like my own shows!

What is in store for the winner on this show?

The winner gets a one-year deal, earning half a million dollars. Also, the winner gets a discretionary fund, worth US$500,000, which can be used to buy scripts or hire writers.

There's no guarantee that the movie will get made, however. What is guaranteed is that the winner will work at DreamWorks, developing movies.

If all goes well [though] ... a movie. If it's last-minded and fantastic, can be produced by the end of 2008 or early 2009.

Who will have copyright to the film?

I don't know the technical term, but [Jason Placks and I are partners in this project [with] the director .... But the actual copyright belongs to the movie studios, like any other film.

What are your next projects?

I am now actively meeting with writers to produce my own movie. I definitely want to be in the film industry, but I didn't do this [show] because of this. It's just a coincidence. This year, I also agreed to produce the MTV Movie Awards. It's a big "film" year for me...with the movie, the MTV awards and "On the Lot."

Are you turning your back on TV?

It's not that the TV industry is unstable. It's just that we don't know what the distribution will be like in five to 10 years. Exactly how movie going is: get cameras...whether on a telephone, cell phone, computer or television...that I don't know.

[What I'm sure of is that] creative producers, writers and actors will still be around to provide content. [That's why] I'll still continue with my TV career. My company is evolving. Now, we make content for TV, movies and the Internet.

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2 NIGHT at the MUSEUM	6 THE MESSENGERS
3 HANNIBAL RISING	8 APOCALYPTO
4 THE CLEANER	7 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER

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2 THE MESSENGERS	6 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
3 APOCALYPTO	7 HANNIBAL RISING
4 NIGHT at the MUSEUM	8 THE HOLIDAY

NOVALICHES

1 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER	4 THE CLEANER
2 THE MESSENGERS	5 APOCALYPTO
3 THE HOLIDAY	

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2 THE MESSENGERS	4 HANNIBAL RISING

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2 NIGHT at the MUSEUM	
3 LITTLE CHILDREN	
4 THE MESSENGERS	

LIPA

1 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES	
2 TENACIOUS D	
3 AGENT X44	
4 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE	

DASMARINAS

1 THE MESSENGERS	
2 APOCALYPTO	
3 THE CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER	

ANGELES

1 APOCALYPTO	
2 CHARLOTTE's WEB	
3 THE MESSENGERS	
4 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER	

IMUS

1 APOCALYPTO	
2 THE MESSENGERS	
3 THE HOLIDAY	
4 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER	
5 NIGHT at the MUSEUM	

STARMILLS

1 NIGHT at the MUSEUM	
2 CHARLOTTE's WEB	
3 AGENT X44	
4 THE MESSENGERS	
5 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER	
6 APOCALYPTO	

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1 BLOOD DIAMOND	
2 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX	
3 NIGHT at the MUSEUM	
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6 TENACIOUS D	

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Choose Your Valentine Show

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR, AND so, once again, we are helping you pick the best show for that special date, by asking the concert artists who are going onstage what they have in store for audiences.

Jolina Magdangal

"Songs of Love," with Rouelyn Bread, Feb. 23, Resto Hall, Star Mall Edsa-Shaw. Call 718-3886.

When you're not doing a concert, how do you celebrate Valentine's Day?

I celebrate it with the people special to me.

What's the most romantic Valentine's Day you've ever experienced?

Romantic and unique? Boboyng Mañalac, her boyfriend and I celebrated it through the internet. He was still in the United States then. We used a web cam and had wine during our online date!

JOLINA MAGDANGAL

What's an ideal Valentine date?

An "ideal" date for me is to be with someone you really love. To go somewhere easy and relaxing. It would be great if it's somewhere cool so that we can cuddle! May bonding pa! Hahaha!

Who's your fantasy date?

For a real person, I'd pick Josh Groban. I'd love for him to sing a love song only for me. As for a fictional character, Mikhael Jendrik (played by Whitworth Miller on "Prison Break"). It's okay even if we are jailed together! Hahaha!

What's the most romantic love song?

It's the Lindsey "Somewhere in Time," "Also, "Got to Believe in Magic" and "After All" (from the movie "Chances Are").

If you were not doing a show, who would you watch?

David Foreman. He's been my idol for the longest time. The first time I worked with him was on 90.5 AAP. He was so nice to me. Later, when I was on a UK tour, he volunteered to join in my concert. My dad and he will have been exchanging e-mails since. In my CD "Jolina Sings the Masters," David did two songs for me—one is "Heals Me to Fly" which I sang in Yokohama, Japan.

Why should we watch your show?

It's on Feb. 23 and really its not my lead product day. And since it starts at 5:30 pm. If you get there before the show starts, you can still shop in the mall. Apart from me, the line-up of David Foreman will also be there to serenade you and your partner. Beyond Sun Bingo Jr.

More shows

• An evening of romantic music and dancing with Abet Imperio on Feb. 14 at Hyatt Hotel and Casino Manila. Call 245-1234 loc. 7883.

• Carren Flowers's Gipsy "Voices of Energy," a Valentine dance concert on Feb. 16 and 17 at the Music Museum, with Suzy Torres Gomez and the Heritage. Call 751-2323.

• *A Ai Ai* for Ai Ai and Ogie Alcasid premiere a night of love and laughter in "Love is Laugh" on Feb. 13 and 14 at the Music Museum. Call 405-1128.

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